



Supporting Early Career Researchers (ECRs) in Horizon Europe: ECR Recommendations from 10 Marine Science Projects

This brochure supports the European Commission, principal investigators, institutions, grant assessors and those included in the process of engaging Early Career Researchers (ECRs) within Horizon Europe (HE) projects. Success stories and recommendations are shared to increase opportunities for professional development.

Within Horizon Europe collaborative research and innovation projects, the training and professional development of early career researchers (ECRs) is increasingly framed as an integral component, with capacity building embedded in dedicated work packages and ECRs identified as a priority target group.

The Commission has reinforced this project-level focus with structural investment aimed at improving their working conditions and career prospects in line with the European Charter for Researchers.

Yet, the extent to which these commitments translate into meaningful integration of ECRs in the day-to-day life of Horizon Europe projects remains uneven.

You can find a complete version
of these recommendations here



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ECR Engagement in HE projects

ECRs brings

Innovation in
methods, tools
and science
communication

Close familiarity
with current
literature

Strong
professional
drive

Conceptual and
interdisciplinary
flexibility

Generational
viewpoints
complementing
senior colleagues

ECRs encounter recurring barriers

Limited
professional
networks

Low visibility of
non-academic
career pathways

Short
employment
contracts

Little involvement
in final reporting
or exploitation
activities

Weak leadership
development
pathways

Success Stories



Dedicated session at the consortium meetings to present ECRs research.



Enriching and supportive action for ECRs.



Consortium emails about ECRs activities and publication opportunities.



More opportunities for career development and strength research profile.



Multi-project HE ECR network hosted regular meetings and joint activities.



Webinars on grant writing, funding, and collaborative publications.



Cross-project AZTI summer school 2024 included ECRs from multiple HE projects.



Helped ECRs build networks, skills, and confidence.



ECRs lead/co-lead several tasks and related activities.



Experience in deliverables and publications, alongside leading.

Recommendations in Support of ECRs

Tailored capacity building and training

Co-define training priorities
with ECRs.

Recognise transferable skills
alongside technical ones.



Evaluate engagement in Grant Proposals

Set ECR-related KPIs and
budget.

Facilitate ECR best-practice
guidance to proposal
templates.



Enhance community visibility and mentorship

Run dedicated ECR sessions
at meetings and events.

Enable cross-project work,
with dedicated funding and
time.

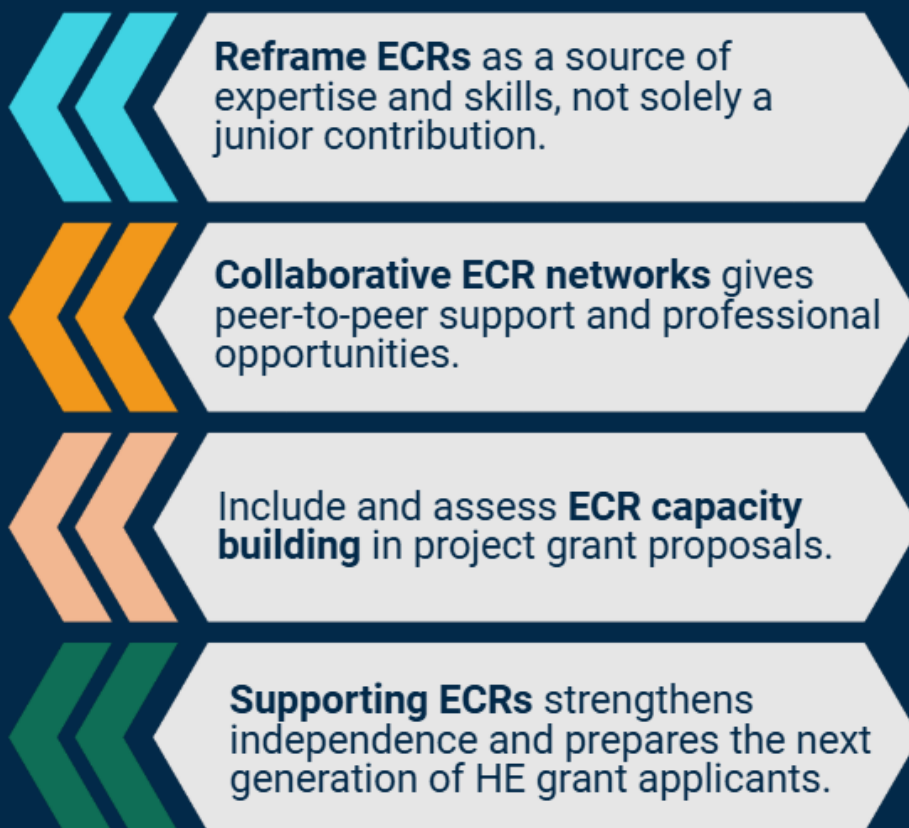


Provide career support

Assign ECRs as task co-leads
and offer mobility mechanisms.

Ensure equitable, accessible
support for all ECRs.

Take Home Messages



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This document reflects the views of several ECRs and does not represent the official positions of any research projects, institutions, or funders.