

# Returning to Europe after 7 years in the United States and Japan

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future MSCA-IF Fellow (University of Edinburgh)

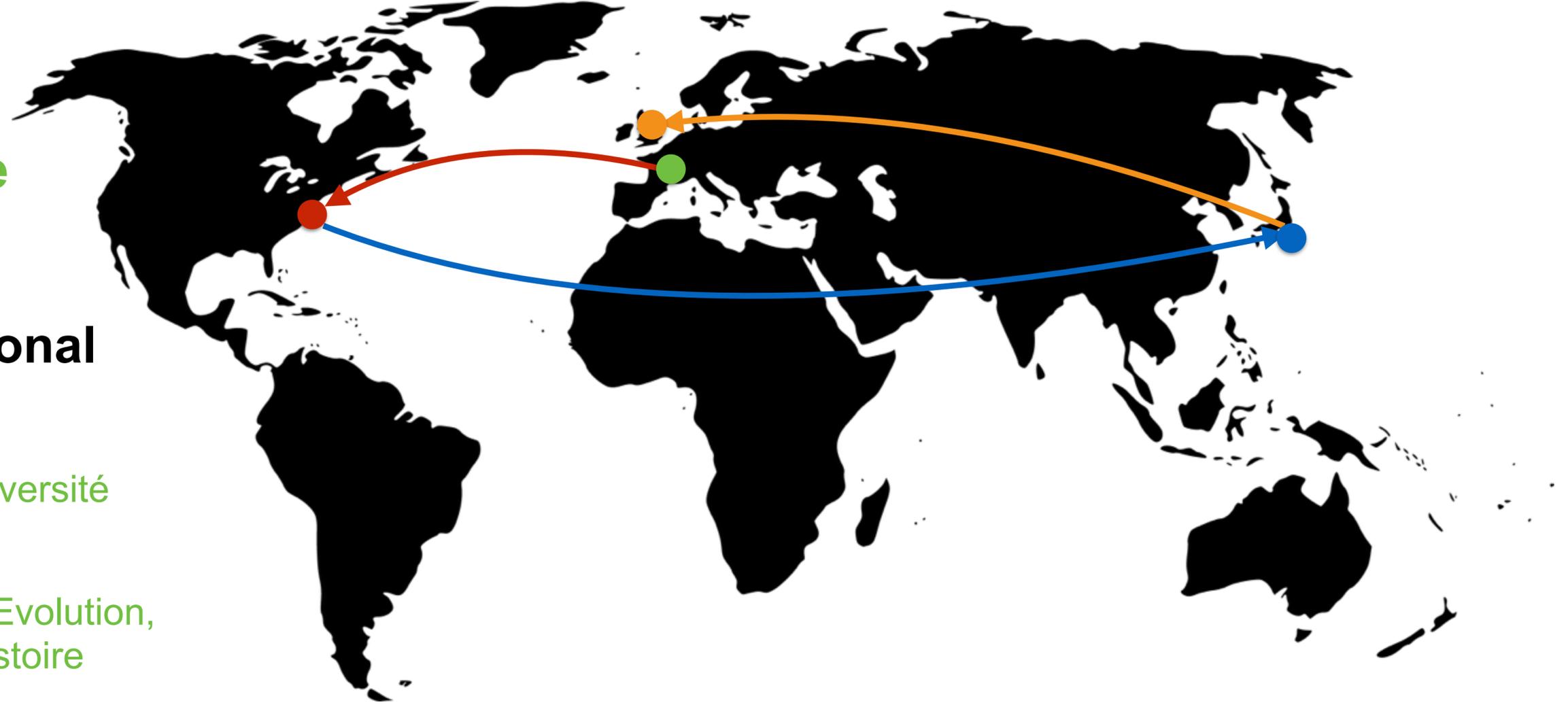
November 25, 2016

European Research(ers') Day 2016 (EURAXESS-Japan)

**Home country: France**

## Education and professional experience

- 2006 : BSc. Life Sciences, Université Pierre et Marie Curie (UPMC)
- 2008 : MSc. Systematics and Evolution, UPMC/ Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle
- **2009- 2013 : Ph.D. Comparative Biology, American Museum of Natural History, Richard Gilder Graduate School**
- **2013 - 2016 : JSPS Postdoctoral Fellow, Nagoya University**
- (2017 - 2019 : MSCA Fellow (Individual Fellowship), University of Edinburgh)



## Research interests: evolution of scale insects

- Systematics and phylogenetics
- Fossils preserved in amber and integration of extinct groups in a dated phylogeny
- Evolution of metamorphosis and hormonal regulation of sexual dimorphism
- Evolution of genetic systems

# My JSPS experience towards research independence

- **2013 - 2016** : JSPS short-term & long-term Fellowships
- Nagoya University, Laboratory of Applied Entomology with Dr Chieka Minakuchi
- **Motivations**: switch in research area while using my previous expertise

## Benefits

- learned new techniques and literature
- established collaborations with Japanese researchers
- mentored students
- designed and implemented a novel project with a non-model system

## Drawbacks

- no teaching experience opportunities
- few networking opportunities (SO created NUECRA and attended international conferences)

# Returning to Europe after 7 years

## **Why do a second postdoc?**

- Reconnect with the research community in Europe (networking)
- Acquire additional research experience
- Acquire teaching experience
- Acquire additional skills towards research independence

## **How did I choose my next lab?**

- Laura Ross, at the University of Edinburgh
  - Worldwide expert in evolution of genetic systems using scale insects
  - Met her in 2010 at an international meeting on scale insect studies
  - Reconnected with her via email in 2014 after my research area switch
  - Complementary research experience and skills

# Funding options

1. Newton Fellowship (UK)
2. Royal Commission (UK)
3. EMBO (EU)
4. Human Frontiers Fellowship (international)

## **5. HORIZON2020 (EU): MSCA-EF-IF-Reintegration Panel (<36 months in Europe in the last 5 years)**

### Why apply for the MSCA Fellowship?

- Prestigious (+++ for CV)
- Independence
- Well paid (allowance + mobility + family + research funds + indirect costs to host institution)
- Good practice for bigger grants (~20 pages)

# Funding options

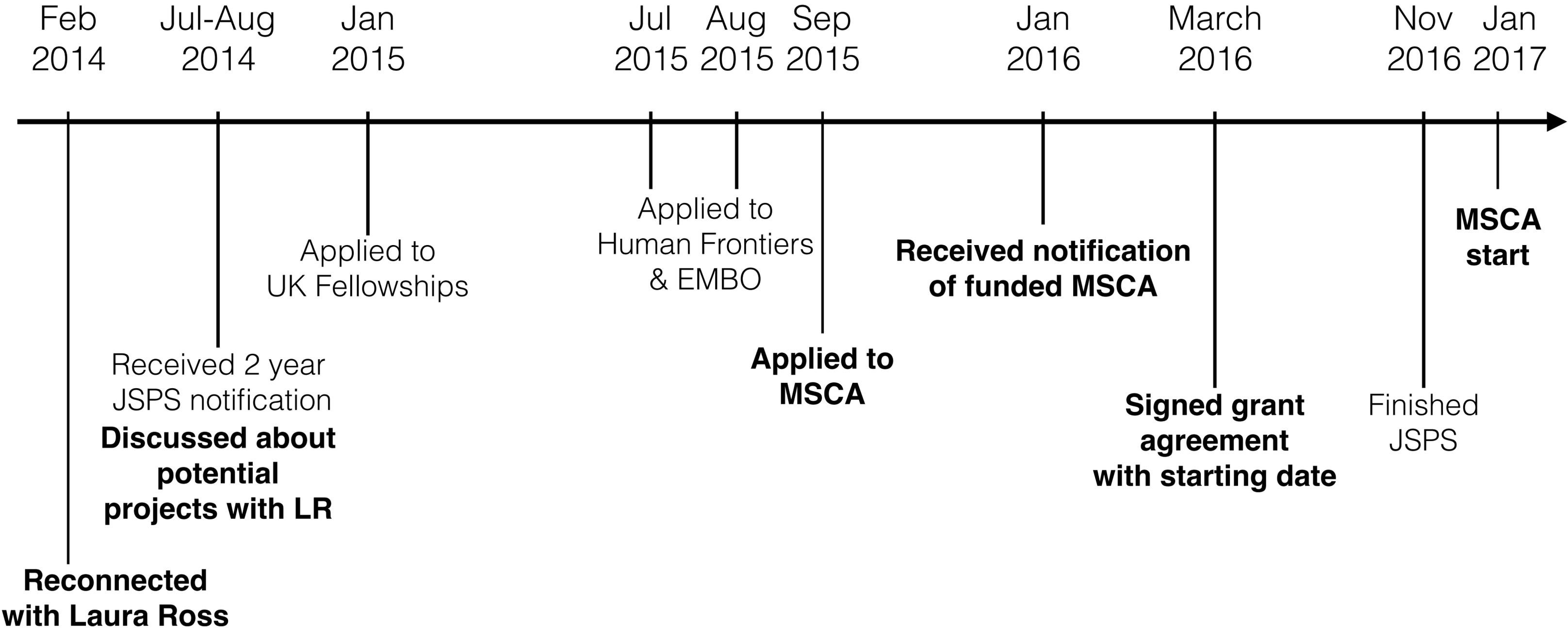
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# MSCA Application calendar



# Evaluation of MSCA-EF-IF

Total score out of 100 (threshold 70%): 96.4%

Very detailed feedback on funded and unfunded proposals

## Criterion 1 - Excellence

Score: **4.90** (Threshold: 0/5.00 , Weight: 50.00%)

### Excellence of the project

#### Strengths:

- This is a **highly innovative** and original proposal to understand genomic imprinting mechanisms by using a model system where the extreme form of imprinting known as paternal genome elimination is taking place.
- Project includes **a number of interdisciplinary aspects** and combines **a wide range of methodologies** in insect genomics.

**very detailed and thoroughly-designed experimental plan.**

Knowledge transfer, benefits and quality measures are presented in

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### Excellence of the host institution and supervisory team

- *The lead supervisor of the project and the remaining team members are at the forefront of evolutionary genetics and epigenetics.*
- *Students of the mentor have won prestigious national awards indicating the intellectually stimulating and productive environment.*
- *Hosting arrangements are also very well described and relevant for the advancement of the candidate.*

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### Excellence of the researcher

- *The expertise of the fellow in working in genetics and epigenetics with minute insect models, knowledge in bacterial phylogenetics is expected to contribute to the research activities of the host's team.*
- *The applicant shows independent creative thinking as the project stems from the applicant's previous research.*
- *The applicant shows convincingly qualities to pursue reach professional maturation and to become an independent researcher. He is also active in supervising junior level students.*

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## Criterion 2 - Impact

Score: **4.60** (Threshold: 0/5.00 , Weight: 30.00%)

### Training for the researcher

*at the project will provide substantial training opportunities to the candidate in a diverse array of fields, including advanced recombinant DNA technologies, -omics and functional studies including RNAi and CRISPR/Cas9.*

*interdisciplinary research is expected to improve future career perspectives of the applicant. The institution is expected to expand the research network.*

#### Weaknesses:

*• Given that the applicant does not have any previous training in genetics, epigenetics and bioinformatics affected by the additional time required to fill the knowledge gap with the basics in these fields.*

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### Impact to the research community and public

- *A comprehensive list of effective communication measures and dissemination avenues are presented in selected and very well formulated. The plans are realistic and credible.*
- *The dissemination and exploitation of results are very precisely planned with references to respective W publications and press releases, conference communications, protocols and methods, data sharing plan.*
- *All the research data resulting from the project will be freely accessible by the scientific community.*

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## Criterion 3 - Implementation

Score: **5.00** (Threshold: 0/5.00 , Weight: 20.00%)

**Realistic in 24 months**

**Assess risks (have a plan B)**

bed, *very clear, precisely specified and fully in line with the aims of the project.*

*a Gantt Chart is presented;*

*•A comprehensive list of organisational management procedures, financial management strategy, progress monitoring measures are presented. This is a professionally prepared and very effective structure that may serve as a "good practices" example to any research analysis mitigation and management structures are also very convincingly integrated.*

- Potential risks within the project are well addressed and credible contingency plans are considered.*
- A formulation of career development plan is highlighted.*
- The host institution is top-rated and offers appropriate infrastructure for the completion of the project.*

# Tips to apply for MSCA (from my experience)

- **Host institution:** if possible choose one with experience with MSCA applications (they have their own staff) and prestigious
- **Host supervisor:** choose one that has experience with MSCA fellows OR *build a supervisory team* with senior researchers
- **Project idea:** innovative, that use cutting-edge technology and multidisciplinary or linked to the industry BUT realistic
- **Project acronym:** memorable
- **Project implementation:** *as detailed as possible* (from experimental methods to data management and access) and *realistic* (plan B, precise calendar)
- Maintain your network and connections outside of Japan (going to conferences overseas, regular email correspondance etc...)
- Make sure your potential supervisor is committed to apply with you
- Obtain access to successful/unsuccessful proposals if possible
- **START EARLY** (calls start in March)

# Useful information

- Official website to submit proposals
- Guidelines from other universities (Google search)
- Blog FAQ on MSCA: <http://mariecurieactions.blogspot.fr/> (unofficial but very useful)
- How to write a winning proposal for Individual Fellowships: <http://www.mec.cubist.gub.uy/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/How-to-write-a-winning-MSCA-proposal.pdf> (good and bad examples from previous proposals)
- If you have questions to me: [isabelle.vea@gmail.com](mailto:isabelle.vea@gmail.com)