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Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Doctoral Networks

Information For Applicants: Submission and Evaluation

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15 June 2023

Housekeeping

All participants will be muted for the duration of the webinar.

A chat function is available and will be monitored.

The session is **recorded**

Please use the Q&A function to submit questions. Up voting is available

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Agenda

1 Welcome

Introduction to UKRO and UK Relationship to EU

2 Submission Process

Overview of the submission process

3 Evaluation Process

Overview of the evaluation process

4 Question and Answer

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About UKRO

We support UK organisations involved in EU R&I funding

- Maximise UK participation in Horizon Europe
- Provide a service to around 140 subscribers
- A Brussels-based team of advisors
- Part of UKRI's wider International team
- UK National Contact Point for European Research Council and Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions programmes

Unlock the power of the UKRO portal

Sign up for MSCA news delivered to your inbox

Register for an event

Find out more about MSCA funding opportunities

Contact the UK MSCA National Contact Point

https://www.ukro.ac.uk/mariecurie/

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UK’s Relationship with the EU

Participation on Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe participation

On 24 December 2020, the negotiations on the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement concluded

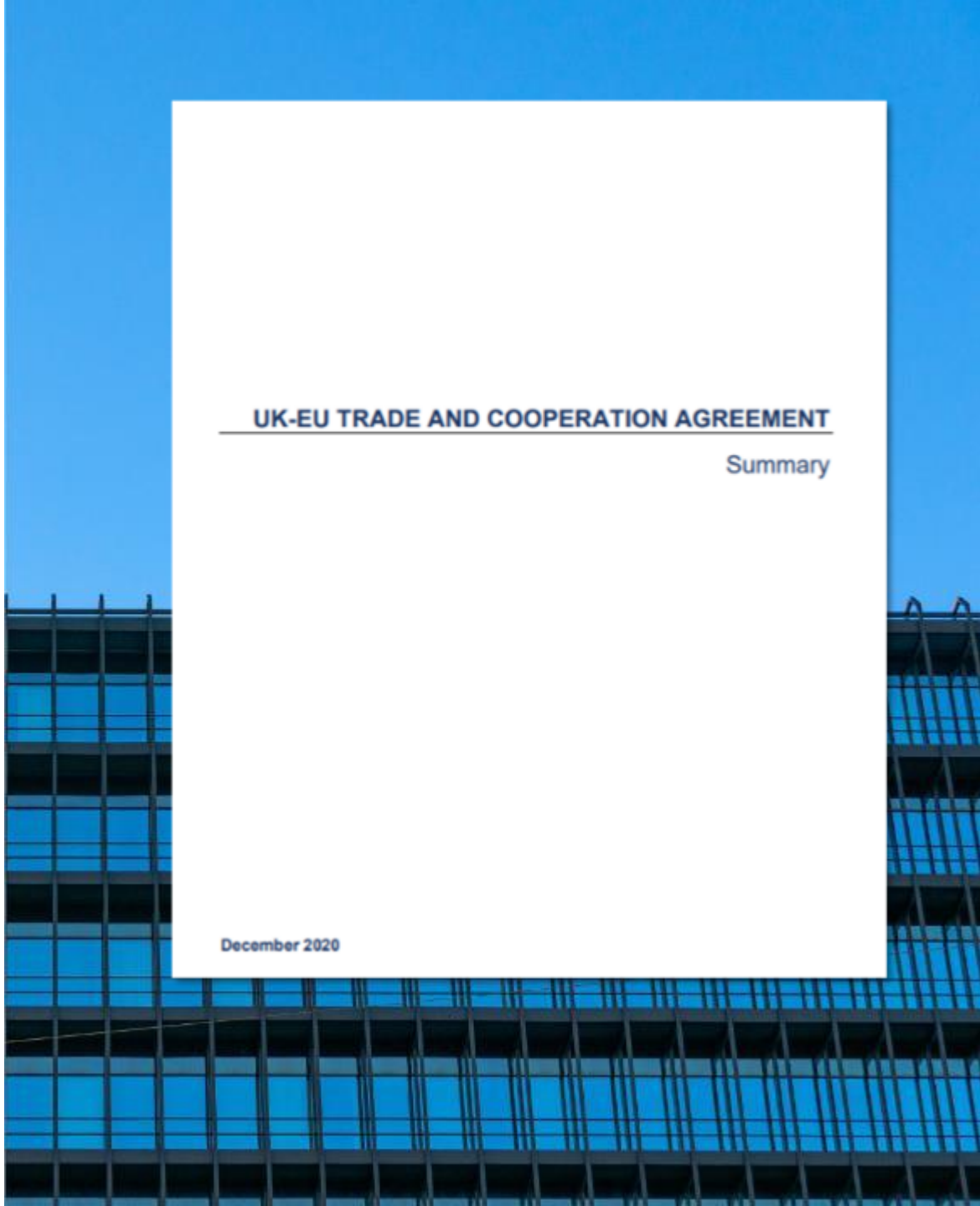
The announcement confirmed the UKs' intention to associate **to Horizon Europe**

This includes **full participation in the programme** (with the exception of the EIC Fund)

UK entities can participate in/coordinate projects and receive funding from Horizon Europe, incl. MSCA

European Commission's Q&A confirms UK eligibility

UKRO website provides latest information on UK participation



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Commission Q&A

European Commission's Q&A confirms UK eligibility to apply:

"UK entities including universities, research centres, scientists, innovative businesses, industry, etc. can participate in the first calls for proposals of Horizon Europe as soon as they are published on the European Commission's website."

"…UK applicants are treated as if the UK is an associated country throughout the process, from admissibility and eligibility to evaluation, up until the preparation of grant agreements."

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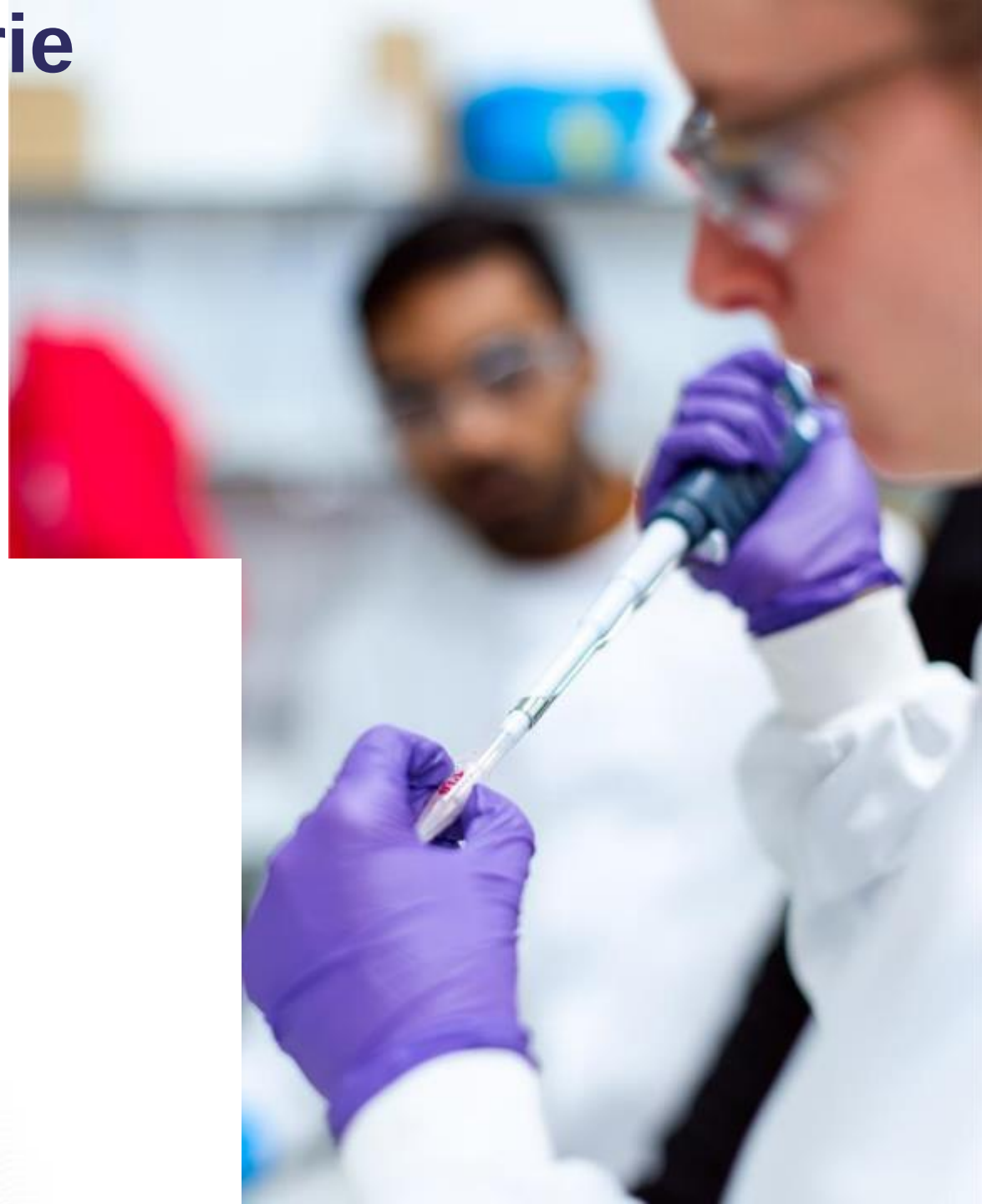
What Does this Mean for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions?

UK based organisations and researchers can

- Coordinate
- Recruit doctoral candidates as a beneficiary
- Host MSCA Fellows on secondments

https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/news/horizon-europe-uk-participation



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

Quick Overview

What Does Horizon Europe Look Like?

Excellence Science: Reinforcing and extending the excellence of the Unions science base

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https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

MSCA Key Features

- Operates on a ‘bottom-up’ basis – any subject area
- From basic research through to near market take-up
- 3 I approach to mobility - interdisciplinary, intersectoral and international
- Enhance skills of people behind research and innovation
- Gender Friendly and Inclusive – equal opportunities in the research content
- Dissemination and public engagement - public outreach

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MSC Actions

Doctoral Networks

- Supports doctoral programmes, developed by universities, research institutions and research infrastructures, businesses including SMEs,and other socio-economic actors from different countries across Europe and beyond.

Postdoctoral Fellowships

- Enhances the creative and innovative potential of researchers holding a PhD.

Staff Exchanges

- Promote innovative international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration in research and innovation.

COFUND

- Co-finances new or existing doctoral programmes and postdoctoral fellowship schemes.

MSCA and Citizens

- Aims to bring research and researchers closer to the public at large, to increase awareness of research and innovation activities and to boost public recognition of science and research education.

MSCA Doctoral Networks

HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01

Overall strategy for Doctoral Networks

Training through Research

Train creative, entrepreneurial, innovative and resilient doctoral candidates

Develop doctoral candidates who are able to face current and future challenges

Increased emphasis on exposure beyond academia

Encourages 3I approach to mobility

Supports long term employability

Raising the excellence and structure research and doctoral training

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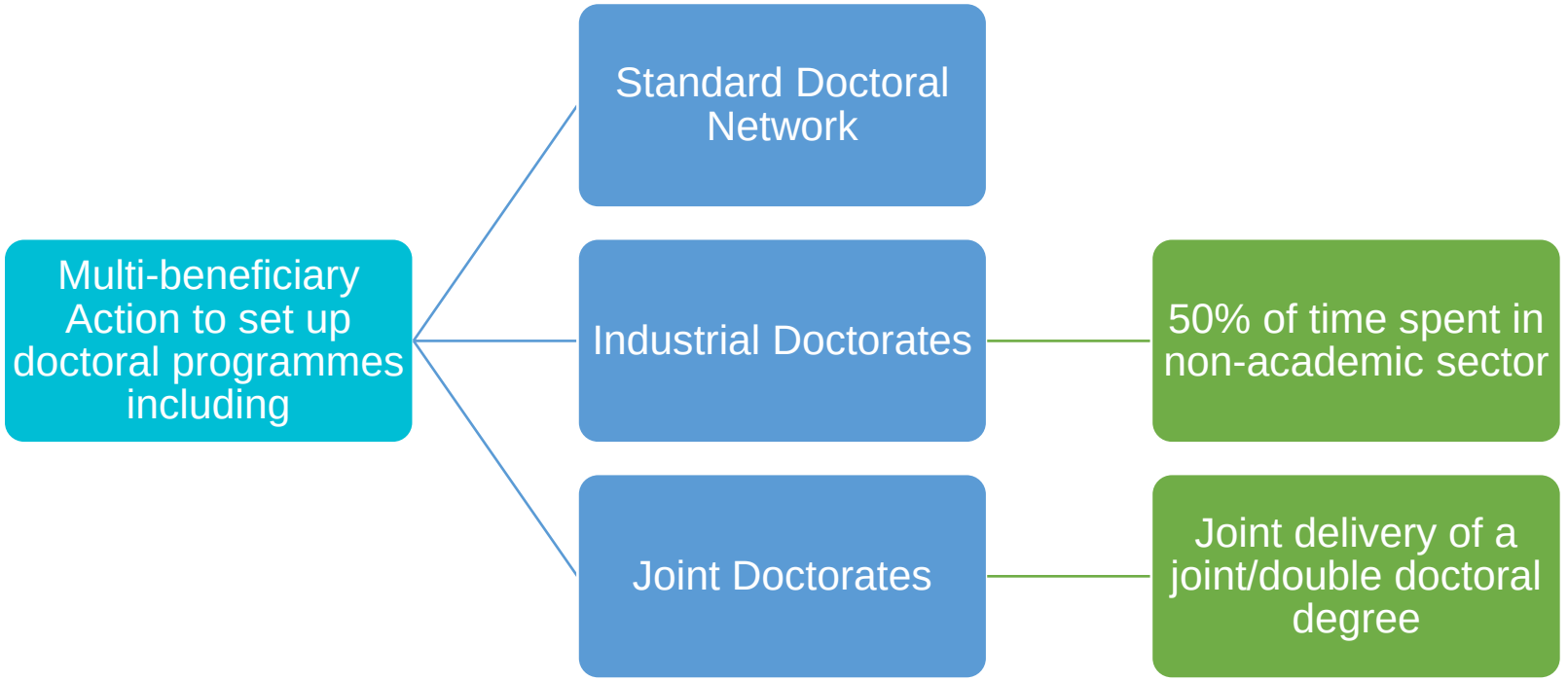
Set up

- Consortium is composed of partnerships of universities, research institutions and research infrastructures, businesses including SMEs, and other socio-economic actors from different countries across Europe and beyond.



Submission Process

Getting started

Submission outline

Register in the Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal and create an **ECAS /EU Login account**

Get in touch with your **research support office**

Add relevant **contact people** to the online application

Submit **early** and **often** – *latest version will be accepted*

Keep the **Guide for Applicants and MSCA Work Programme** in front of you!!!

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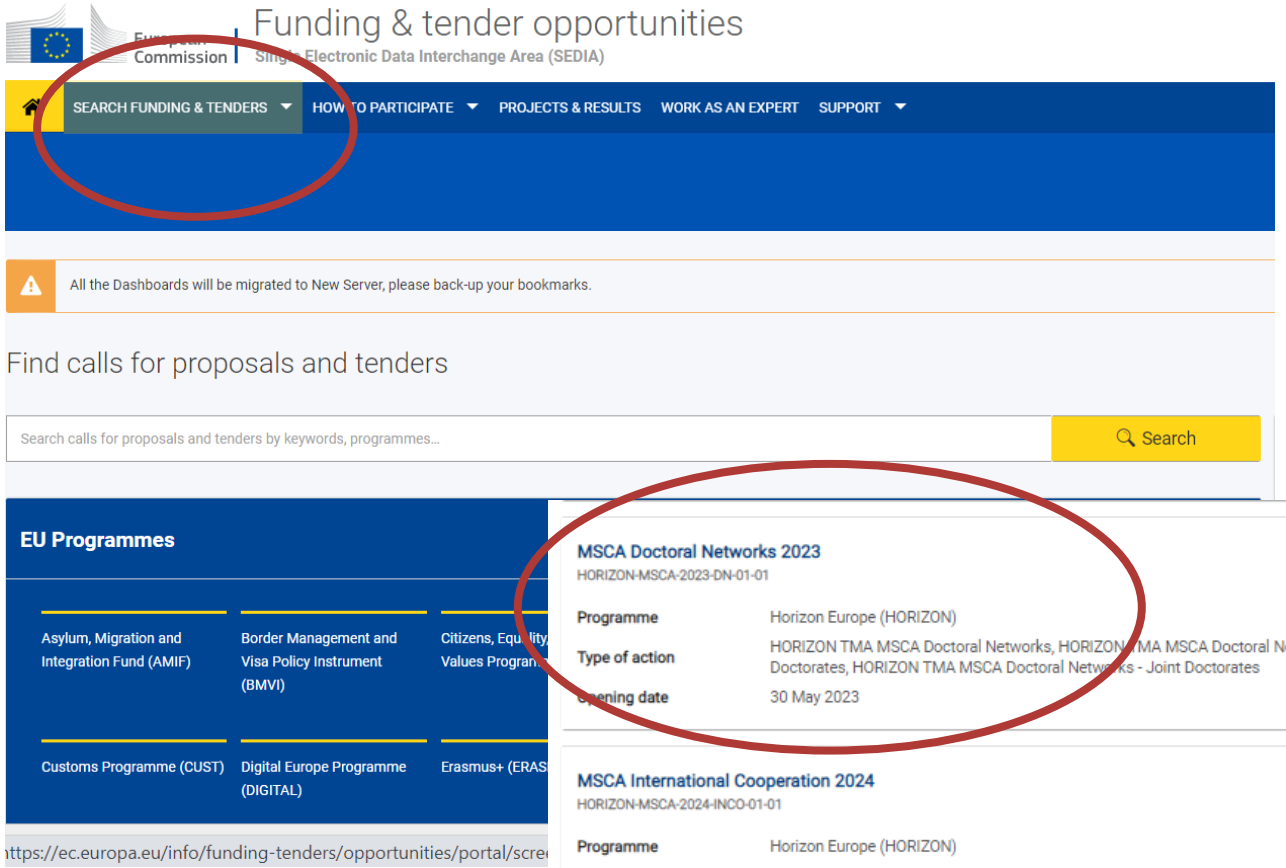
Funding & Tender Opportunities



[HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01-01]

MSCA Doctoral Networks 2023
HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01-01
Call for proposal | Grant

Programme	Horizon Europe (HORIZON)	Status	Open for submission
Type of action	HORIZON TMA MSCA Doctoral Networks, HORIZON TMA MSCA Doctoral Networks - Industrial Doctorates, HORIZON TMA MSCA Doctoral Networks - Joint Doctorates	Deadline model	single-stage
Opening date	30 May 2023	Deadline date	28 November 2023 17:00:00 Brussels time

MSCA International Cooperation 2024
HORIZON-MSCA-2024-INCO-01-01
Call for proposal | Grant

Programme	Horizon Europe (HORIZON)	Status	Forthcoming
Type of action	HORIZON Coordination and Support Actions	Deadline model	single-stage
Opening date	14 May 2024	Deadline date	04 September 2024 17:00:00 Brussels time

MSCA COFUND 2023
HORIZON-MSCA-2023-COFUND-01-01
Call for proposal | Grant

Programme	Horizon Europe (HORIZON)	Status	Forthcoming
Type of action	HORIZON TMA MSCA Cofund Doctoral programme, HORIZON TMA MSCA Cofund Postdoctoral programme	Deadline model	single-stage
Opening date	10 October 2023	Deadline date	08 February 2024 17:00:00 Brussels time

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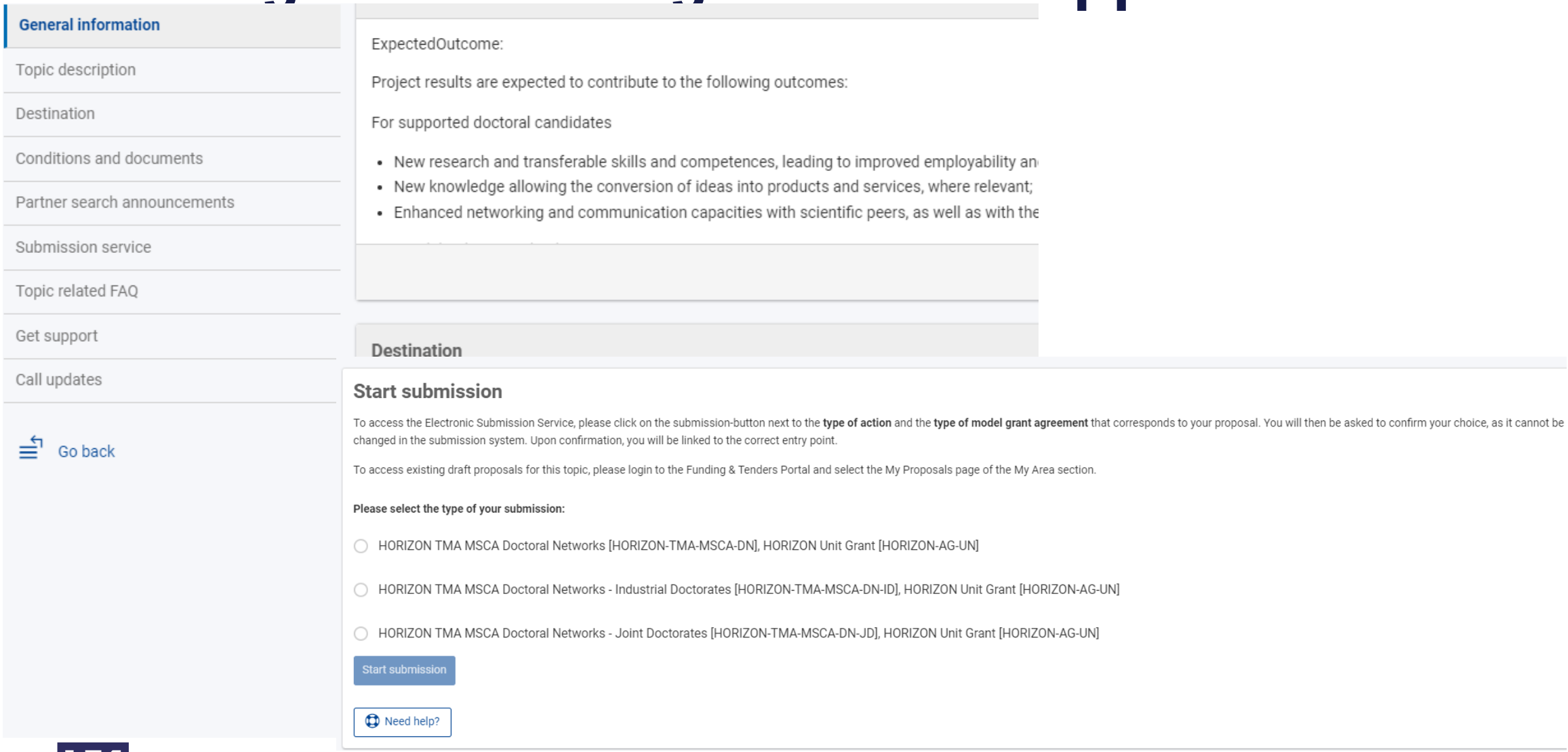
Call Page on Funding & Tender Opportunities



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The Application

Structured data entered into the IT system

Acronym and Title for the project (NB title is not the same as acronym)

Select the Scientific Area (i.e. panel) which is the “best fit”

Up to 5 “Descriptors” which best characterise the content of the proposal, in descending order of relevance

First 3 descriptors linked to selected panel, others unrestricted

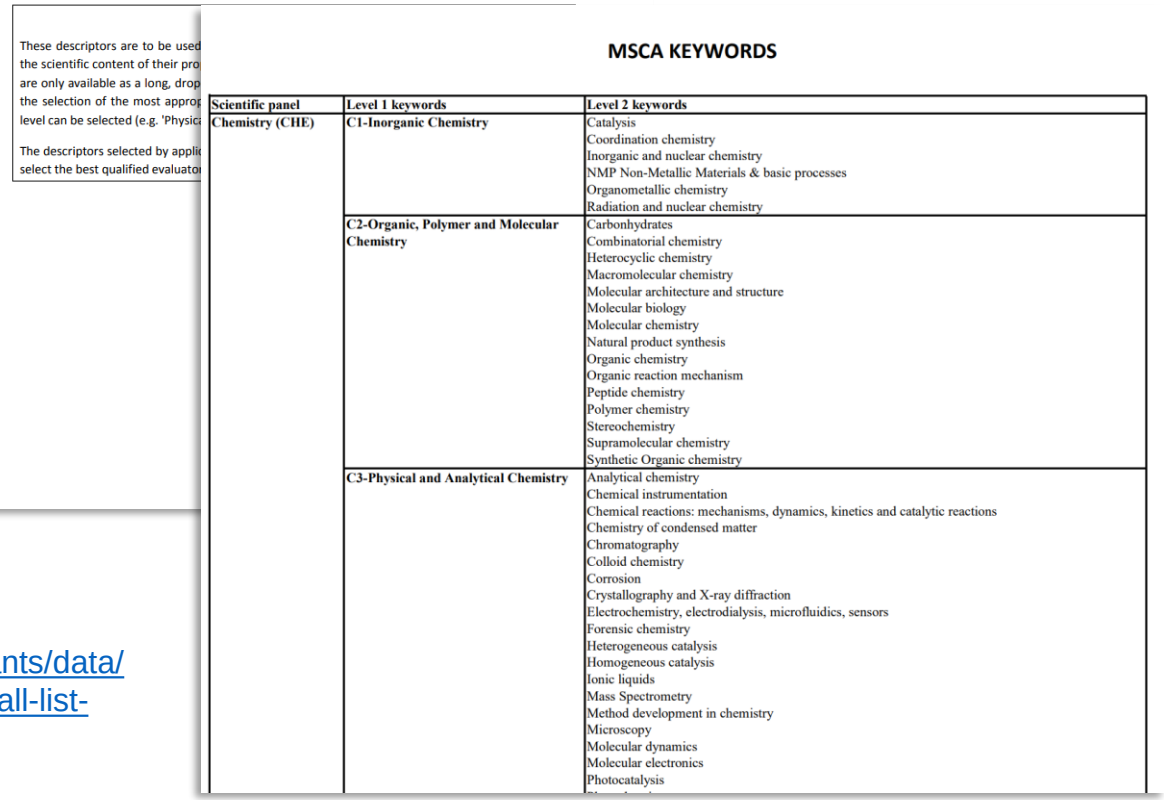
Free keywords

Abstract: maximum 2,000 characters

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

List of Descriptors

https://rea.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-10/MSCA%20Keywords.pdf



These descriptors are to be used
the scientific content of their pro
are only available as a long, drop
the selection of the most appro
level can be selected (e.g. 'Physic

The descriptors selected by appli
select the best qualified evaluato

MSCA KEYWORDS

Scientific panel	Level 1 keywords	Level 2 keywords
Chemistry (CHE)	C1-Inorganic Chemistry	Catalysis Coordination chemistry Inorganic and nuclear chemistry NMP Non-Metallic Materials & basic processes Organometallic chemistry Radiation and nuclear chemistry
	C2-Organic, Polymer and Molecular Chemistry	Carbonhydrates Combinatorial chemistry Heterocyclic chemistry Macromolecular chemistry Molecular architecture and structure Molecular biology Molecular chemistry Natural product synthesis Organic chemistry Organic reaction mechanism Peptide chemistry Polymer chemistry Stereochemistry Supramolecular chemistry Synthetic Organic chemistry
	C3-Physical and Analytical Chemistry	Analytical chemistry Chemical instrumentation Chemical reactions: mechanisms, dynamics, kinetics and catalytic reactions Chemistry of condensed matter Chromatography Colloid chemistry Corrosion Crystallography and X-ray diffraction Electrochemistry, electrodialysis, microfluidics, sensors Forensic chemistry Heterogeneous catalysis Homogeneous catalysis Ionic liquids Mass Spectrometry Method development in chemistry Microscopy Molecular dynamics Molecular electronics Photocatalysis

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/call_ptef/pt/h2020-call-list-descr-msca-itn_en.pdf

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Panel Selection

- Evaluation Panels
  - *Chemistry (CHE), Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC), Economic Sciences (ECO), Information Science and Engineering (ENG), Environment and Geosciences (ENV), Life Sciences (LIF), Mathematics (MAT), Physics (PHY)*
- Multidisciplinary is encouraged
- Abstract and Descriptors are important
- Industrial and joint doctorates will be ranked in the scientific panel of submission
- No predefined budget allocation among the panels
  - Budget distributed based on number of eligible proposals in each panel

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Who is Involved in the Submission Process

Coordinator

- Registers the draft proposal
  - *Acronym, summary and panel*
- Adds partner organisations
  - *PIC codes or at least draft PIC and contact details*
- Completes administrative form (part A)
- Responsible for Uploading Part B1/B2 as a PDF

Beneficiaries

- Add additional contacts as appropriate/necessary
- Checks that information in part A is correct
  - *May also be responsible for completing corresponding sections of part A*

Associated Partners

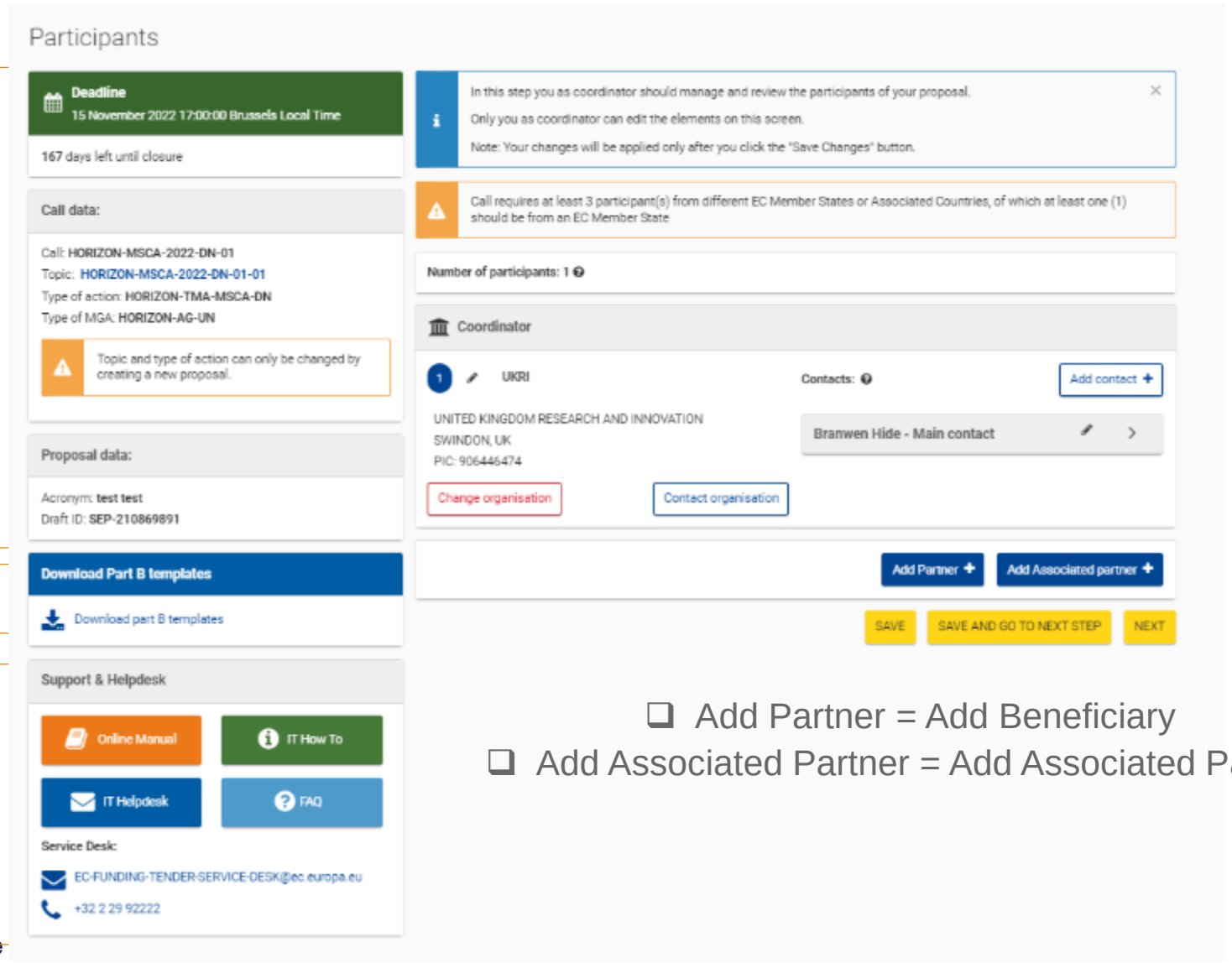
- Do not have access to submission system
  - *To be provided access key contact(s) must be included under the corresponding beneficiary or coordinator*

Adding Participants

Call Information

Template

Support



Add contact details, and partners

- ❑ Add Partner = Add Beneficiary
- ❑ Add Associated Partner = Add Associated Partner

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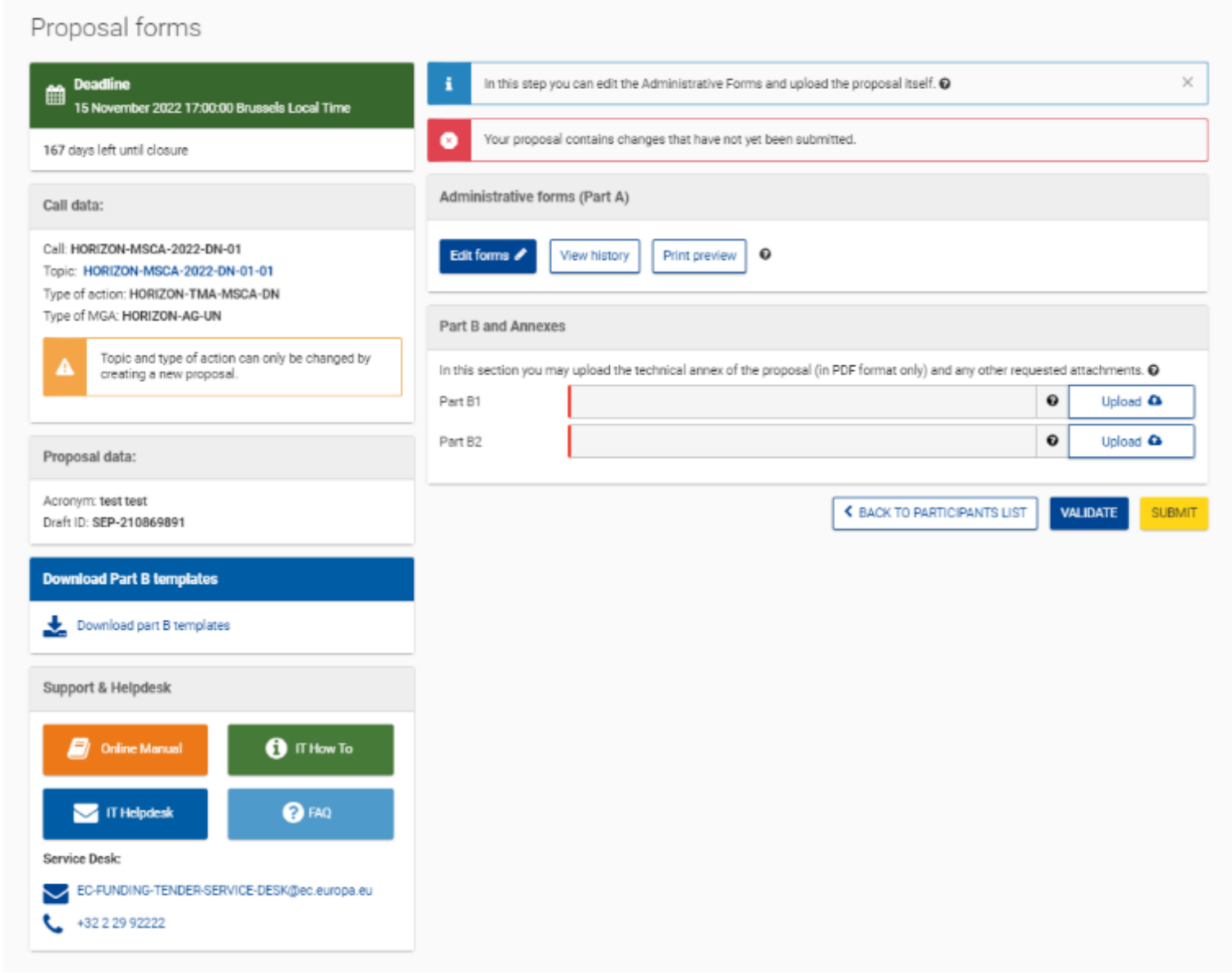
Submission system

Call Information

Template

Support



Part A completed online

Part B must be uploaded as a PDF

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Proposal Forms – Part A (Administrative Forms)

Navigation Tool

Sections to be completed

Guidance

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- Many fields will be pre-populated using information from both PIC and EU Log-ins.
- All other fields to be completed and saved in the online form.

Budget Table

Application forms

Proposal ID SEP-210869891

Acronym test test

3 - Budget

Participant number	Organisation short name	Role	Country	Country correction coefficient	Academic sector	IO	No of recruited researchers	Number of person months	Contributions for recruited researchers			Institutional contributions		Total
									Living allowance	Mobility allowance	Family allowance	Research, training and networking costs	Management and indirect costs	
1	UKRI	Coordinator	UK	1.369	Yes	No	1	36	167565.60	21600	17820	57600	43200	307785.60
2	QMUL	Partner	UK	1.369	Yes	No	1	18	83782.80	10800	8910	28800	21600	153892.80
3	UOXF	Associated	UK	1.369	Yes	No	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0.00
Total							2	54	251348.40	32400	26730	86400	64800	461678.40

- Funding based fully on unit costs, multiplied by requested person months – *see session 2*
- Automatically assumes 70% of DC will be eligible for the family allowance when calculating budget
- Enter the number of recruited researchers (DCs) and number of person months – *taking into consideration split recruitment*
- Cannot make changes to budget line of Associated Partner - *if recruiting DC, the funding they will bring should be included in part B (e.g. Switzerland)*

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Partner = Beneficiary

Ethics & Security questions

UK applicants should answer ‘yes’ on questions about non-European activity

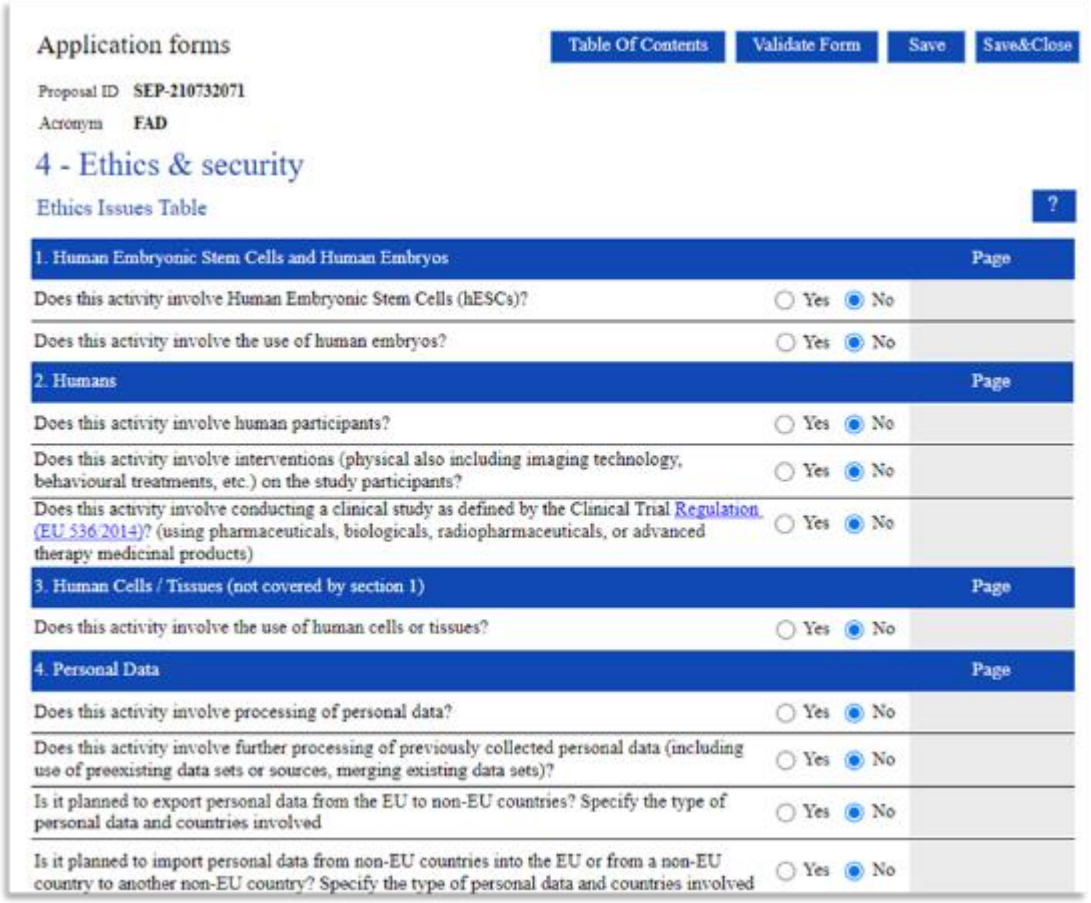
Follow Horizon Europe guidance document: ‘How to complete your ethics self-assessment’

This will not affect eligibility.

Answering ‘yes’ on certain questions may require a brief text response from the applicant.

Applicants may be requested to upload documents related to particular questions.

Page references to relevant sections of proposal for each issue if you answer ‘Yes’ (part B1 and B2)



Application forms

Table Of Contents | Validate Form | Save | Save&Close

Proposal ID SEP-210732071

Acronym FAD

4 - Ethics & security

Ethics Issues Table ?

1. Human Embryonic Stem Cells and Human Embryos		Page
Does this activity involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells (hESCs)?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Does this activity involve the use of human embryos?	○ Yes ◉ No	
2. Humans		**Page**
Does this activity involve human participants?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Does this activity involve interventions (physical also including imaging technology, behavioural treatments, etc.) on the study participants?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Does this activity involve conducting a clinical study as defined by the Clinical Trial Regulation (EU 536/2014)? (using pharmaceuticals, biologicals, radiopharmaceuticals, or advanced therapy medicinal products)	○ Yes ◉ No	
3. Human Cells / Tissues (not covered by section 1)		**Page**
Does this activity involve the use of human cells or tissues?	○ Yes ◉ No	
4. Personal Data		**Page**
Does this activity involve processing of personal data?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Does this activity involve further processing of previously collected personal data (including use of preexisting data sets or sources, merging existing data sets)?	○ Yes ◉ No	
Is it planned to export personal data from the EU to non-EU countries? Specify the type of personal data and countries involved	○ Yes ◉ No	
Is it planned to import personal data from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country? Specify the type of personal data and countries involved	○ Yes ◉ No	

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Part B1

- Complete ALL mandatory tables
- Use required sub-headings
  - Can also include additional subheading
- Action should be divided in Work Packages
  - Should reflect the research objectives
- Deliverables should be divided into
  - Scientific deliverables and management, training, recruitment and dissemination deliverables
- Milestones
  - Control points in the action that help to chart progress and MAY be linked to deliverables

part B1 (document 1):

- Comprises the Start Page, Table of Contents, List of Participating Organisations and and declarations tables
- Sections 1-3 (max 30 pages)
- The maximum total length for this document is 34 pages
- Respect the instructions
- The Expert evaluators will disregard any excess pages above the 34 page limit

part B2 (document 2):

- Sections 4-7
- No overall page limit will be applied to this document
- Respect the instructions

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❖ Applicants will not be able to submit their proposals unless both documents 1 and 2 are provided

Part B1- Key Template Changes From 2022

- The tags cannot be deleted as they are needed for internal processing of information
- Boxes at the beginning of each section have been removed
- Challenges and risk included under section 1.2 will also need to be included in risk-mitigation measures in the implementation risk table 3.1g
- Clarification that a fully detailed DMP is not requested at the proposal stage.
- Additional sub criteria under section 1.2 for projects that will use, develop and/or deploy artificial intelligence (AI) based systems and/or techniques.
- Role of non-academic sector in the training programme has been removed under section 1.3 as a sub criteria.
- Additional guidance and clarification has been included under section 2.1 'Developing sustainable (= lasting) elements of doctoral programmes after the end of the DN funding.'
- Under section 2.2 applicants will need to "*explain how the project and the training will give technical and transferable skills to the fellows, which will improve their employability in academia and/or the industry*."
- Clarification that a detailed IP management plan is not expected at this stage, an outline of the strategy for the management of IP is mandatory at the proposal stage (section 2.3)
- The supervisory board has been removed as a subheading under section 3.1.
- Under section 3.1 applicants will need to refer to the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of researchers

Formatting

Min font size 11*

All margins at least 15mm**

Reference font is Times New Roman (Windows platform), Times/Times New Roman (Apple platforms) or Nimbus Roman No. 9 L (Linux distributions)

Literature references should be listed in footnotes

The page formatting will be systematically checked by the REA

Information provided through hyperlinks will be disregarded

Tables should not be used to circumvent min font size

Headers and page numbers as specified

Save files using specified format and naming convention

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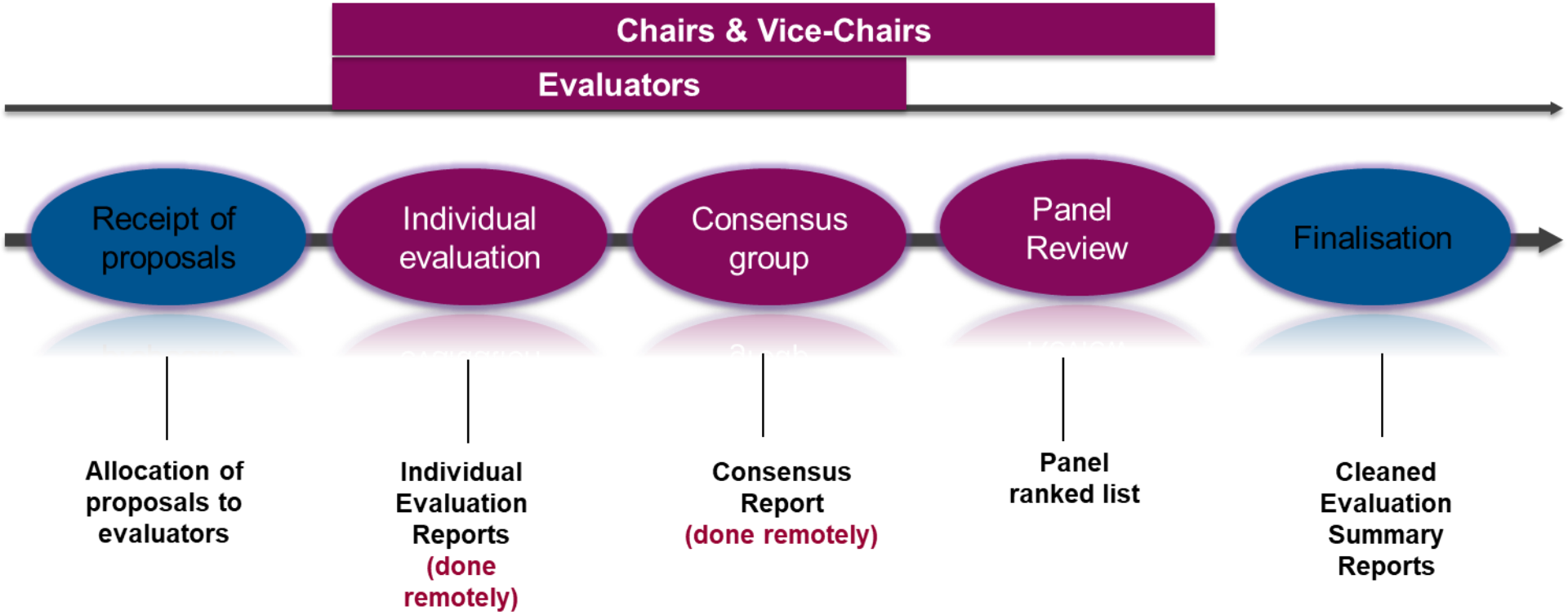
*Except for the tables and footnotes (min. font size 8)

** Not including any footers or headers

Evaluation Process

How does it work

Evaluation Workflow



- Automatic pre-allocation done by REA based on MSCA specific key words
- Vice-Chairs revise the pre-allocation of proposals to experts
- Do not assign 3 experts from the same nationality to a proposal, taking into account Conflict of Interest

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Evaluation Process

Each of the experts prepares an Individual Evaluation Report

Rapporteur drafts Consensus Report (CR) reflecting their comments

Once comments agreed, discuss and agree on score

CR is reviewed by Vice-Chairs for consistency

Final version becomes Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) sent to the applicant

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/temp-form/ef/ef_he-msca_en.pdf

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Evaluation and scoring

Proposals funded in ranking order

Highly competitive and need to score of 90-95+ depending on the panel

Same scores: prioritisation decided by panel, based on scores for award criteria (weighting above).

If needed further prioritisation based on criteria in line with the WP (e.g. gender balance of supervisors, involvement of non-academic sector, geographical spread, international co-operation, etc.)

Distribution of the indicative budget is proportional to the number of eligible proposals received in each panel

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Resubmission Restrictions

Applicants having a **score below 80% in the DN 2022 call are not eligible to resubmit a similar proposal in the DN 2023 call**.

A `similar' proposal - one that differs from the current one **in minor ways, and in which some of the present consortium members are involved**.

REA has a system in place to flag any similarities with previous proposals, which may be double-checked by some external experts for most critical cases.

REA **may contact the applicants** who should not have resubmitted, to ask them to explain how different their proposal(s) would be, compared to the previous submission(s).

The final eligibility decision will then be taken by the REA Admissibility and Eligibility Committee appointed for the call evaluation.

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Evaluation Criteria

Excellence (50%)	Impact (30%)	Quality and efficiency of the implementation (20%)
Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation **objectives** (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and **go beyond the state of the art**)	**Contribution** to structuring **doctoral training** at the **European** level and to **strengthening European innovation capacity**, including the potential for: a) meaningful **contribution** of the **non-academic sector** to the doctoral training, as appropriate to the implementation mode and research field b) developing **sustainable elements of doctoral programmes**	**Quality** and effectiveness of the **work plan**, assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages
Soundness of the proposed **methodology** (including **interdisciplinary approaches**, consideration of the **gender dimension** and other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the **quality of open science practices**)	Credibility of the measures to **enhance the career perspectives and employability** of researchers and contribution to their skills development	**Quality, capacity and role** of **each participant**, including **hosting arrangements** and extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the **necessary expertise**
Quality and credibility of the training programme (including transferable skills, inter/multidisciplinary, inter-sectoral and gender as well as other diversity aspects)	Suitability and quality of the **measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts**, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities	
Quality of the supervision (including mandatory joint supervision for industrial and joint doctorate projects)	The magnitude and importance of the project's **contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts**	

Proposal Development

Points to Consider

Section 1 Excellence

Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives

- State the research/technical problem/knowledge/specific skills gap your DN will address and how
- Use diagrams, tables, figures as appropriate to clarify any point
- Have clear objectives - link to methodology
- Highlight originality and innovativeness
- Explain how individual projects integrate into the research programme
- Work Packages should reflect the research objectives
- Training through research

Soundness of the proposed methodology

- Describe and explain the overall methodology (links to objectives)
- Explain approaches to complying with open science requirements and gender
- Explain data management plans - a fully detailed DMP is not requested
- Highlight inter/multi disciplinary elements
- Is using AI provide explanations on the technical robustness of the proposed system

Section 1 Excellence

Quality and credibility of the training programme

- Detailed summary of the training objectives stressing the innovative aspects
- Training - core research skills, advanced/additional research skills/transferable skills
- Training opportunities unique and tailored to particular areas
- Offered on local and network wide level or wider (as appropriate)
- Emphasise the role of any non-academic organisations in the training and their impact
- Including secondments is highly recommended to increase impact
- Think about links to ECTS, EDCI etc - European approach to micro-credentials
- What other training programmes are you apart of that the DN can take advantage of – Erasmus+. EIT, UKRI DC, COFUND

Quality of the supervision

- Qualifications of supervisor(s) (Numbers of previously supervised fellows, of post-docs mentored etc)
- Reference European Charter for Researchers
- Include details of joint supervision - mandatory for Industrial and Joint doctorates;
- Clear and well structured supervisory plan
- Clear role of the supervisory board
- Gender balance
- How will they complement each other
- Who will be responsible for what aspects

Section 2 Impact

Contribution to structuring doctoral / early-stage research training at the European level and to strengthening European innovation capacity, including the potential for:

- Meaningful contribution of the non-academic sector to the doctoral/research training (as appropriate)
- What is their role of the non-academic sector in the programme and how does it enhance it to be world leading?
- What can the programme offer that other programmes don't or can't?
- Make sure the innovative aspects that the non-academic partners bring are emphasised
- Make it clear what the sustainable elements of doctoral programmes are after the end of the DN funding

Enhancing the career perspectives and employability of researchers - contribution to their skills development

- Explain the impact of the research and training on the Fellows' careers
- Link research training, transferable skill development and exposure to different sectors
- Think about how the research programme fits into higher level EU policies:
- European Charter for Researchers, Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, MSCA Guidelines for Supervision

Section 2 Impact

Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities

- Horizon Europe obligations to make publications and research data open access
- How will the results be disseminated, which repositories, etc.?
- Data Management Plan
- Plans for Exploitation of results and intellectual property - detailed IP management plan is not expected
- Think how, what form of protection, when?
- IPR Helpdesk for MSCA Fact Sheet
- Describe the dissemination, exploitation and communication measures that are planned, the target group
- Detail the project's plans for communication of research findings
- Does the project have communication and public engagement strategy? – hint, they probably should!
- Who are the appropriate audiences for these activities?
- What are the appropriate means for these activities?
- Communicating EU R&I Guidance for Project Participants

The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts (project's pathways towards impact)

- Explaining how the project's results are expected to make a difference in terms of impact, beyond the immediate scope and duration of the project
- Scientific, Economic and Society impact (as appropriate)

Section 3 Implementation

Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages

- Clear, concise, achievable work Packages
- Research, Management, Training, Dissemination and Communication
- List of major deliverables and major milestones
- Risk assessment and mitigation
- Work Packages should reflect the research objectives
- Number of deliverables must be reasonable – scientific, management, training, recruitment, dissemination
- Clear details on recruitment process

Quality, capacity and role of each participant, including hosting arrangements and extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise

- Explain the appropriateness of the infrastructure and capacity of each participating organisation against project needs
- Contributions of participating organisations with justification – why this consortium is best to deliver
- Synergies between all partners – added value of working together
- How they complement and enhance each others activities
- Exposure to different sectors or working outside ‘comfort zones’:
- Developing transferable skills (of benefit to industry)
- Justification for funding for non-associated third countries (if applicable)
- Demonstrate complementarity across the network in terms of compatibility and coherence between tasks
- Explain the level of commitment of the organisations involved – particularly non-academic sector

Section 4 – Network Organistion

- Demonstrate tasks for each participating organisation and appropriateness
- Involvement of HR or Finance support in institutions?
- What do the organisations have to offer: Laboratories/Office Space, Technical expertise, Workshops, Other facilities
- Refer to the European Charter for Researchers and institutional endorsement
- 'HR Strategy for Research (HRS4R)' award - demonstrates competence for recruiting and hosting
- Explain who will be responsible for what and when will they do it:
  - Network organisation and management structure/supervisory board
  - Admission, selection, supervision, monitoring and assessment procedures
  - Risk management at consortium level
  - IPR, Gender, Open Access, Data Management etc.
- Clear decision making and conflict resolution strategies
- Clear progress monitoring provisions
- Are there other HR awards the organisation has – Athena Swan?

Section 5 Environmental aspects in light of the MSCA Green Charter

MSCA Green Charter is a set of guiding principles that aim to raise awareness, encourage best practice, empower fellows

- How will the project reduce its the carbon footprint?
- How will the project increase the awareness on environmental issues, promote sustainable behaviours and policies?
  - Of the recruited researchers and organizations involved
- What do the institutions already do that will be capitalized on the project?
- How will the project adhere to the MSCA Green Charter during implementation
- Directly link to research and training

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MSCA Green Charter Guidance Material

Key Considerations for Sections 6 and 7

Operational capacity of the organisations

- Use tables to present factual information
- Profile of key staff, description of key infrastructure or technical equipment,
- Partner organisations contributing towards the proposed work
- Different information for Beneficiary and Partner
- If requested in Part A – be consistent

Letters of Pre-Agreement

- For DN JD
- Signed by an authorised legal representative
- Offer reasonable assurance regarding the commitment to award the joint, double or multiple doctoral degree(s)
- Basic template provided
- Included in part B2
- Lack of a letter can deemed proposal ineligible

Letters of Commitment

Letters of commitment from associated partners are no longer required.

All associated partners must be added in the part A of the proposal, and their role should also be clear from part B1 and B2.

It should be clear from part B1 which associated partners are linked to a beneficiary, and which ones are not.

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Evaluators comments

Examples from ESR

Evaluator Comments – Excellence

Strengths

- the overview of the action as well as the objectives are clearly formulated and well-balanced between scientific and training and mobility.
- The research programme is clearly articulated, coherent and relevant regarding the field.
- The individual research projects are sufficiently analysed and in line with the research objectives.
- Qualifications and supervision experience of the supervisors are well evident.
- All participants have established strong synergies in the field.
- The partners interact in actively.
- The roles of the non-academic partners are well-integrated.

Weaknesses

- Innovative aspects of the training are not clearly justified.
- The interaction between academic and non-academic partners is not fully explored.
- Gender aspects of the research approach are not convincingly demonstrated. The information provided regarding gender issues does not refer to clear provisions translated into concrete measures.
- The allotted time for some of the activities, e.g. the conference, is not sufficiently considered.
- The opportunities to pursue research careers at high profile universities and in well-established private enterprises are not sufficiently elaborated.

Evaluator Comments – Impact

Strengths

- The potential for meaningful contribution of the non-academic sector is high and credible.
- The dissemination strategy is concrete and appropriate and offers a practical plan on how to share data resources and results of the project with different target groups like partners, specialists and a general audience.
- The communication and public engagement strategy are clearly described, using different platforms and taking advantage of special events like the European Researcher's Night, which ensure a broad audience.
- The communication plans include a good number of actions towards the industrial sector.
- Relevant outcomes for the economy and society are adequately outlined.
- Long-lasting collaboration between sectors after the end of the project are foreseen.

Weaknesses

- The impact of the programme on the fellows' careers beyond the research field is not guaranteed.
- The relevance of complementary skills to enhance careers of the fellows is insufficiently discussed.
- The measures for dissemination of results have been described; however the dissemination plans are not quantified and no innovative activities are included. The focus on disseminating results within the small membrane scientific community is not clearly justified.
- Outreach activities towards general public described, but relevance is not clearly discussed.

Evaluator Comments – Implementation

Strengths

- The listed work packages are well defined with clear deliverables and milestones.
- The individual ESR projects are well structured with well argued and realistic objectives, expected results, secondments. The secondments are coherent with the objectives.
- The basic principles of the management of the project are clearly formulated: shared responsibility, joint ownership of data and good communication.
- The management structure is clear and well structured with a Supervisory Board that guarantee an adequate balance between scientific and technological training.
- The management plan offers a realistic problem-solving mechanism in the event of disputes between partners with the creation of an External Advisory Committee.
- The progress monitoring mechanisms and evaluation of individual projects are clearly presented.

Weaknesses

- The procedure for awarding doctoral degrees is not clearly presented.
- The complementarity of the partners is not sufficiently demonstrated.
- Key research facilities, infrastructure and equipment of both beneficiaries are insufficiently detailed
- The timing in the work plan is not convincing
- The management structure is not fully clear. It contains few bodies and relies to a large extent on individuals instead of boards/committees. The structure supporting this is not clearly explained.
- The scientific milestones and their means of verification are not sufficiently defined.

Final Thoughts

- ❑ Why does the EU/AC need a cohort of researchers training in this particular research area
- ❑ Where could the researchers end up working
- ❑ How can we design an DN to ensure that these researchers are employable in these areas
- ❑ How will this DN contribute to structuring research and doctoral training in EU/AC
- ❑ REMEMBER - DN is not only a research project – training-through-research!
- ❑ Understand Goals and Expectations of the Beneficiaries and Associated Partners
- ❑ Consider relevant EU policy documents
- ❑ Fully appreciate the evaluation criteria

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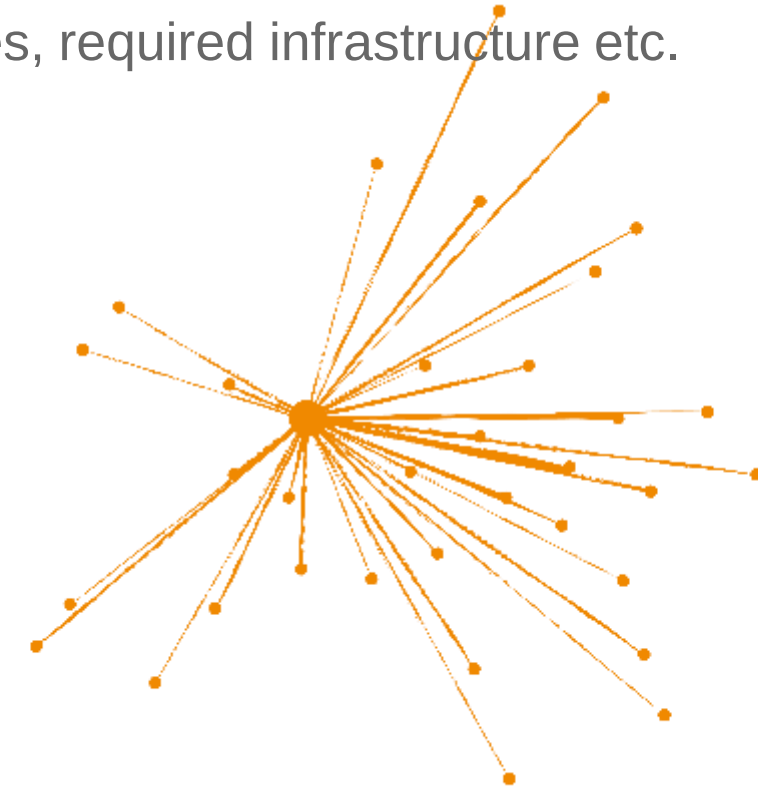
Final Thoughts con’t

- Institutions need to be clear on the what they have to offer
- Make sure all partners are fully integrated
- Clearly link partners to the training & research objectives, methodologies, required infrastructure etc.
- Be explicit and offer concrete examples
- Sustainability of the collaboration
- Level of Ambition – needs to be ambitious, but realistic
- Link to the MSCA guidelines on supervision
- Remember the Fellows are employees
- Have contingences in case of issues between ESR and supervisor
- Clarity of PhD length (beyond 36 months) and funding for extra time
- Be clear on use of research, training and networking costs (consistency across the network is ideal)



Proposal Advice

Key points

- Read all call documentation and the evaluation criteria
- Consider any relevant EU policy documents
- Make it easy for the evaluators to find the information
- Evaluators will be experts, but not necessarily in your exact area
- Use clear and concise language
- Explain country/research area specific jargon
- Include diagrams, images, tables if appropriate
- Meet your consortium partners (virtual or otherwise)
- Set clear expectations
- Be clear on any budget redistribution (in CA?)
- Research previous and current projects
- Find colleagues to proof read drafts with the evaluation criteria
- The proposal will take time to write

Additional Resources

UKRO Portal https://www.ukro.ac.uk/

MSCA – How to Apply

https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-marie-sklodowska-curie-actions/horizon-europe-msca-how-apply_en#ecl-inpage-291

MSCA-NET handbooks and policy briefs

Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home

Horizon Europe Strategic Plan https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/3c6ffd74-8ac3-11eb-b85c-01aa75ed71a1

Horizon Europe Programme Guide https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf

Open Science Resources OpenScience.eu, Open Science, How to evaluate open science in Horizon Europe Proposals

Gender in Research Resources Genderaction.eu ,Gendered Innovations ,Gender in Research

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The Call Timeline

MSCA Doctoral Networks 2023 (HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01)

Action	Date
Invitation to Submit Proposal	30 May 2023
Deadline for Submission	28 November 2023 17:00 Brussels Time
Evaluation of Proposals	November – January 2024
Information on Outcome of Evaluations	March-April 2024
Indicative Date for Signing the Grant Agreement	May- July 2024

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Make sure things are ready in good time and submitted well ahead of the deadline!

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Thank you

Questions?

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