

General Questions

- 1. If PhD candidates are funded for 36 months at most, what rules apply for the reminder of their degrees?**

Institutional costs or national funds can be used to cover the shortfall. The arrangements for the final year of their PhDs (not EU funded) should be included in the proposal, including details on salaries etc; there is no requirement for funding to be at EU level, however, please keep in mind that MSCA salaries should be competitive. Otherwise, you can apply for a Joint Doctorates where the maximum duration is 48 months.

- 2. Where the funding goes to in case of industrial doctorate - industry or university?**

The funding goes to the beneficiaries, depending on the number of person months requested, regardless of whether they come from academia or industry.

- 3. Please can you explain potential involvement of countries outside EU and associated states. Especially, can you explain the differences in high-income countries such as Japan and low-income countries such as South Africa?**

Some Low- and Middle-income countries can participate as beneficiaries and therefore receive funding from the European Commission. Other countries such as Japan can join as an Associated Partner, training and hosting Doctoral Candidates. Their funding will be agreed in the Consortium Agreement, but associated partners cannot claim funding directly from the European Commission.

For further information, please visit the [list of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe](#).

- 4. For joint doctoral networks, does the PhD candidate need to be enrolled as a student at both institutions formally? Is it a requirement that both universities award the degree formally, or is it sufficient to have a university award the degree and enrol the student with a second university participating 50% in the supervision of the PhD and creation of the project?**

In MSCA DN JD, the Doctoral Candidates need to be enrolled in at least two higher education institutions awarding PhDs. For further information, please visit the [Guide for Applicants](#).

- 5. Is family allowance a single monthly payment, or multiplied by the number of dependents? Does a spouse qualify them for it regardless of their employment status?**

Family allowance is a flat rate (unit cost) monthly payment, regardless of number of dependants and the employment status of the spouse.

- 6. What is the average of months requested for successful applications? 540 months is the maximum, but it would be useful to know what the amount for most awards is.**

It will depend on the number of Doctoral Candidates (DCs) that each beneficiary recruits, but above all, it needs to make sense for your consortium. For example, a consortium of 7 beneficiaries, if each recruit two DCs for 36 months, this will translate into 504-person month.

- 7. What are the potential disadvantages of having a UK higher education institution serve as the coordinator (main applicant) of a MSCA DN consortium? Would it be more advisable for an EU-based institution to take on the coordinating role instead?**

The UK is an associated country since January 2024 and can participate in Horizon Europe and Copernicus on equal terms to EU member states. There is no disadvantage to the UK being a lead - unless for reasons to do with the project, expertise or facilities, that a partner elsewhere was a more 'authentic' lead than the UK a partner.

For context, the last round of MSCA DNs saw very strong participation from the UK, with a total of 149 funded projects, of which UK entities were:

- Coordinator on 13 projects (4th)
- Participating in 124 projects as beneficiary (2nd) and 108 projects as an associated partner (5th)

- 8. I understand that a project manager can be hired via redistribution of the indirect costs among the consortia. Does that project manager have to be an administrator, or it can also be a postdoctoral researcher with the right technical understanding alongside administrative skills?**

It will depend on the expertise required as a project manager and the amount of budget redistribution within the consortium. You will also need to check the career path they are on within your institution to make sure there are not conflicts there. Otherwise, there are not restrictions on having a post-doc doing project management in a MSCA DN consortium.

- 9. How does the success rate, defined as number of awards over the total number of applications of DN compared to the success rate of ID?**

All the types of DNs are evaluated and ranked within the panel they have been submitted to. Therefore, it is defined by the numbers of awards over the total number of applications.

- 10. In the industrial scheme is it best to place the 36 months in the University host, or 18 months in the University and 18 months in the industry host?**

It could be either or. Bear in mind that different country correction coefficient will apply if you recruit 18 months at one beneficiary and 18 months at another beneficiary, which might affect your decision to choose either or.

11. Can you please elaborate a bit more on what distinguishes a double or multiple PhD award from a joint PhD award?

- A **joint degree** refers to a single diploma issued by at least two higher education institutions offering an integrated programme and recognised officially in the countries where the degree-awarding institutions are located.
- A **double or multiple degree** refers to two or more separate national diplomas issued by two or more higher education institutions and recognised officially in the countries where the degree-awarding institutions are located.

The final joint, double, or multiple degree must be awarded by institutions from at least two different MS and/or AC countries. Each Researcher must be enrolled in a doctoral programme leading to the award of a doctoral degree in at least one EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country, and for Joint Doctorates in at least two.

12. Is it a good practice to have 1 work package for every research objective?

It is usual practice to include 3 or 4 Research WPs. Also include non-research Work Packages such as Management, Training, and Dissemination, Exploitation, Communication, and/or Public Engagement.

13. How is interdisciplinarity assessed in a standard or joint doctoral network proposal? Does it pertain to the project itself (i.e. the project is clearly interdisciplinary) or must involve departments/research units belong to different disciplines?

It usually refers to the interdisciplinary nature of your project, but often when there are several departments or schools involved is because the project needs different disciplines involved to develop and deliver the project, making the project interdisciplinary.

14. I wonder how it works when we have on board countries such as Norway, which are more expensive. As I understand, a country can claim up to 40% of the EU contributions. So, it somehow does not look fair to compare budgets one-to-one between countries based on EUROS when it happens (e.g., Norway is more expensive and more generous than other countries). Is all somehow taken to a "currency/unit costs"?

The Country Correction Coefficient is used to leverage the differences in costs between different countries.

15. In last month's MSCA DN Call info day a question was asked: "is there a requirement in 2025 for a Research Data Management Plan to be included?" The answer provided was that this had 'been removed. You do not need to include detail of this any longer in your proposal'. You mentioned a DMP needed to be a standard deliverable within a proposal, but does there need to be more explicit mention of this anywhere else (or is it effectively assumed by the Commission that you will have one in place in a Network)?

Data management is part of Open Science practices and is therefore evaluated as part of the proposal

16. Is there an expectation for a successful proposal to include industry partners, even for DN and JD? Do you have a better chance if you include secondments in industry?

This will depend on your proposal, but industry partners are encouraged as exchange between sectors is an aim of the MSCA.

17. Could you please clarify whether all dual award agreements between higher education institutions must be in place before the submission deadline on 25 November? Additionally, must these agreements be established only among the beneficiaries, or can they also involve associated partners—for example, between Uganda and Sweden, or South Africa and the UK?

Joint or multiple degrees must be awarded by at least partner from an MS or AC; the pre-agreement letters must be included in Part B of the proposal (template is in the proposal).

18. Does it look better to involve large companies rather than SMEs, considering that large companies may be able to provide more and better support due to having more resources? Is it still advisable to involve SMEs?

This is dependent on your proposal and the needs of your project; don't choose partners just because of their name but the added value they provide.

19. What would be a reasonable number of pages for B2?

There isn't a strict page limit on Part B2, but it is crucial to adhere to the header and footer formatting guideline.

20. If candidate is recruited from A, can the candidate get allowance (excluding mobility) for the time they stay at A?

The mobility allowance is part of the standard remuneration for the doctoral researchers for the entire time of their employment.

21. Where could we find the scores for all the submissions in the previous round?

The distribution of scores and cut-offs is available on the relevant call page.

22. How does it work with an LMIC beneficiary - they must recruit the ESR, but my understanding is that the ESR needs to be enrolled in a PhD program in an EU member state or associated country. How would this work in reality?

Additional beneficiaries can be established in EU MS, AC or low- and middle-income non-associated countries (LMIC) included in the list of countries eligible for funding. ESRs can be enrolled in PhD programmes in a LMIC. However, should the LMIC entity not be entitled to award a doctoral degree, another university or a consortium/grouping of academic/research institutions entitled to award a doctoral degree within the consortium can do so.

23. Would it be possible to establish a consortium that connects different disciplines within the social sciences to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and shared initiatives?

Yes, as long as it is fully justified and fits within the aim of your project.

24. I am building on an existing PhD network (in this case three partners Australia, Finland and UK) is there an ideal number of for the consortium? I assume more important are the skills they bring and reach across EU?

There is not a limit on the number of beneficiaries or associated partners that you can have in a consortium as long as it aligns with the project aims and objectives. Having said that, a consortium with lots of beneficiaries/associated partners might be more difficult to manage. The only limitation is 540 person-month.

25. Is the experience of the PhD supervisors, e.g., how many PhDs have graduated under their supervision, a critical factor in the evaluation? Would early-career academics be considered in a negative way for DN call?

The quality of the supervision will be assessed under the Section 1 – Excellence. However, the mentoring and supervision in place to develop early career academics on their supervision skills will be seen positively, so supervision should be seen as a team effort rather than relying on a single individual.