



EUROPEAN RESEARCH EXECUTIVE AGENCY (REA)

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions & Support to Experts
MSCA Doctoral Networks

Horizon Europe Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Doctoral Network

2024 Call Info Event

Questions & Answers

Please find hereafter the answers to most of the questions submitted in Slido during the **MSCA DN 2024 call info event**, which took place on **7th June 2024**.

If you would like to go back to the questions answered in live, we invite you to watch the **recording of the event**, available on YouTube: [Horizon Europe - MSCA Doctoral Networks 2024 - Call info day \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

If you have any further questions on the DN 2024 call, you can submit your questions through the **Research Enquiry Service**: [Research Enquiry Service - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/research-enquiry-service/).

We also invite you to read all the **documents and guidance material** available to prepare your proposal on the [DN 2024 call page](#) of the Funding and Tenders portal.

In addition, the **slides of the presentations** are available on the **event platform**: [Events | The research and innovation community platform \(europa.eu\)](#).

Thank you again for your active participation!

The MSCA DN Team

| Questions (as submitted in Slido) | Answers |
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| Thank you for this event! Is there an age limit for applying for this research program? | In case you are a Doctoral Candidate and you wish to apply for a position which will be advertised by a project, there is no age limit. The only requirement is that you are a Doctoral Candidate i.e. not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of the recruitment. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will not be considered eligible. Please note that DN is not an individual doctoral fellowship programme, if you wish to embark into a doctoral programme within a Doctoral Network, please check recruitments on the Euraxess website. |
| Does MSCA also announce positions for PHD corporate environmental projects? | The MSCA are open to all domains of research and innovation, chosen freely by the applicants in a fully bottom-up manner. Please also note that all open PhD positions from newly selected or ongoing projects are published on the Euraxess Portal. |
| Can cooperations with relevant bodies like JRC, OECD, ILO, UN... -where (modelling) tools mobilized by PhD students are applied daily- be considered as leading to a more "industrial"-oriented track of MSCA (PhD training)? | The first part of the question was answered in live. Regarding the second part, we would need further clarification before replying. Please contact the Research Enquiry Service to send us more details on your specific request. |
| How to find partners? Is there a partners data base or similar? | You can find partners on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (Partner Search EU Funding & Tenders Portal (europa.eu)) |
| May participating institutions contribute monetarily with a percentage of costs? | MSCA DN funding should cover 100% of the funding needs. However, additional/external funding sources can be used in order to top-up some research, training and networking activities or some salaries (in case the national salary level is higher than the MSCA rates). |
| Does the mobility condition (36 months) deadline apply by the date of the submission or start of the MSCA? | The mobility rule (having not resided or carried out any professional activity in the host-country more than 1 year in the 3 years prior to the recruitment) is counted as from the recruitment date of the Doctoral Candidate in the project. |
| For the management of the project, is it possible to hire a manager from a private company add the company as a beneficiary of the project? | The management of the project is one of the key tasks of the coordinator and cannot be delegated to a private company/consultant. You can recruit a Project Manager to help you with the daily management of the project. |

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| <p>What is the situation of CH participation?</p> | <p>Switzerland is considered a High income Third Country under Horizon Europe and cannot automatically receive funding. Therefore, Swiss entities can participate as Associated Partners. They could participate as beneficiary or coordinator only if their participation and role within the network is considered essential by the expert evaluators for the execution of the project. Please note that it is up to the expert evaluators to assess whether a third country entity (not listed in the HE Programme Guide) is essential for the execution of an action, and that those cases remain exceptional. If the evaluators consider that the EU funding should not be granted, they should assess the proposal as if the entity was participating with their own funds. If the proposal is selected for funding, they will be requested to step down as beneficiaries and participate as associated partners (during the grant agreement preparation). Swiss entities can participate as associated partners and also recruit Doctoral Candidates with their own funds. The evaluators will assess the project as proposed and should not penalize the consortia because a Swiss associated partner recruits fellows with its own funds. Those fellows will be integrated in the project and should as much as possible receive the same rights and obligations than other EU-funded MSCA fellows.</p> |
| <p>Could you please confirm that Associated Partners CAN employ fellows with their own funding. These fellows do not count towards the MSCA DN person-months and DN budget, but are part of DN.</p> | <p>Associated Partners can recruit Doctoral Candidates using their own funding. These fellows will not count towards the MSCA DN total person-months and DN budget. Nevertheless, should an associated partner recruit with its own funds, the recruitment(s) will need to be described in the proposal together with the individual research project(s) of those fellows. Those fellows will be integrated in the project and should as much as possible receive the same rights and obligations than other EU-funded MSCA fellows.</p> |
| <p>In DN Industrial Doctorates is it possible to have only academic beneficiaries recruiting all fellows?</p> | <p>In DN Industrial Doctorates, it is indeed possible to have only academic beneficiaries recruiting Doctoral Candidates, provided that all recruited candidates spend at least 50% of their fellowship duration in the non-academic sector, in the form of secondments. In Industrial Doctorates, the 1/3 limitation in secondments does not apply.</p> |
| <p>Our university deploys only Doctoral Program of 4 years, since the time limit for fellowship is 3 years, is it eligible?</p> | <p>Yes, it is eligible. As the PhD program last more than 3 years in this case, we expect that the recruiting institution secures/finds additional funds in order to cover the remaining year and allow the Doctoral Candidate to finish their PhD.</p> |

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| Is there any limit on the time that a recruited fellow can spend in secondments to an associated partner? | For standard DN projects, secondments are eligible for up to one third of the actual months spent implementing the research training activities under the action. This limitation does not apply in the case of Industrial Doctorates and Joint Doctorates. |
| Are Partner organisations mandatory or can we also have consortia made of only beneficiaries? | There is no obligation to have associated partners. |
| In an ID can a doctoral candidate enrolled in a university spend the 50% of her/his time (18 months) in a secondment to the same non-academic associated partner? | This is possible in an ID project as there is no limitation for secondments. |
| What level of commitment do you expect with the pre-agreement to award a joint, double or multiple degree to the doctoral candidate? | We invite you to read the pre-agreement letter template from the DN application form, that you can find on the DN2024 call page of the Funding and Tenders portal. |
| Where can we find the most recent list of descriptors for the call? | There is a link to the list of MSCA descriptors in the guide for applicants, that you can find on the DN2024 call page of the Funding and Tenders portal. |
| Is there a maximum in the number of supervisors you can have per PhD? | There is no maximum number of supervisors by Doctoral Candidate. The supervisors should be assigned based on the needs to the individual research project of the Doctoral Candidate, as well as her/his training needs. Joint supervision of the researchers is mandatory for Industrial and Joint Doctorates. |
| Can we have partners in Africa? | <p>Most Horizon Europe calls are also open to participants from non-associated countries and international organisations, unless specific limitations or conditions are laid down in the work programme and/or the call/topic text, such as those highlighted for associated countries above.</p> <p>Participants from non-associated non-EU countries can take part in Horizon Europe actions — but not always with funding. The list of low- to middle-income countries eligible for funding can be consulted in the Horizon Europe Programme Guide on the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p> |

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| <p>Who is eligible for which type of partnership?</p> | <p>Applications must be submitted by a consortium including at least three independent legal entities, each established in a different EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country and with at least one of them established in an EU Member State. Should none of them be entitled to award a doctoral degree, a university or a consortium/grouping of academic/research institutions entitled to award a doctoral degree must be added to the project as an associated partner or an associated partner linked to a beneficiary. In order to reach the objectives of Joint Doctorates, at least three independent legal entities must be entitled to award doctoral degrees. At least one of the institutions conferring a joint, double or multiple doctoral degree must be established in an EU Member State and/or Horizon Europe Associated Country. An applicant from the academic sector, which has transferred the right of awarding a doctoral degree to a consortium/grouping of academic/research institutions to which it belongs to, is also eligible.</p> |
| <p>How long can PhD projects be?</p> | <p>The duration of each fellowship (on the basis of full-time employment) is minimum 3 and maximum 36 months, except in the case of joint doctorates, where this maximum duration is 48 months.</p> |
| <p>Should the PhD candidate or the PI apply for the funding?</p> | <p>PhD candidates and PIs do not apply for funding. Applications for funding must be submitted by a consortium which will implement doctoral programmes, by partnerships of universities, research institutions and research infrastructures, businesses including SMEs, and other socio-economic actors from different countries across Europe and beyond. All beneficiaries will need to recruit at least one Doctoral Candidate, whom they will need to host at their premises. The EU contribution for MSCA Doctoral Networks will take the form of unit contributions for: (1) the recruited researchers, which include a living and mobility (and if applicable, a family, long-term leave or special needs allowance) and (2) Institutional unit contributions for the beneficiaries, which include contributions for the research, training and networking activities and management and indirect contributions.</p> |
| <p>What is the evaluation matrix, the reviewers need to check when reviewing proposals?</p> | <p>Evaluators must assess all proposals according to the evaluation criteria, that you can find in the Horizon Europe MSCA Work Programme. There is also a link to the evaluation form in the documents section of the DN2024 call page of the Funding and Tenders portal.</p> |

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| Thank for your presentation. In case of a DN, a selected ESR resigns, for instance in one year or in the middle, what is the best approach to continue and present the measures in the application? | We are not in a position to give advice on how to define contingency measures in the application. |
| When will the guide for applicants 2024 be available? | You can find the Guide for applicants on the call page in the Funding and Tenders portal (click on this sentence) |
| Do all the applications need to include industrial partners? | No, it is not mandatory and should fit within the overall objectives of your project. However, the participation of entities (as beneficiary or associated partner) from the non-academic sector (wider than industrial partners) is highly encouraged for standard DNs and JDs. For IDs, it is mandatory to include participants from the non-academic sector (as beneficiary or associated partner) since the Doctoral Candidates will need to spend at least 50% of their fellowship in this sector. |
| Regarding the novelty you have just presented on the possibility of having a JD with a single EU partner. The non-EU can be a Switzerland partner? | In a DN-JD, it is now possible for a DC to be enrolled in a Joint/double doctoral degree with only one degree awarding institution established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe associated country. Switzerland can be the other degree awarding entity. |
| What are the criteria for non-EU countries? e.g. would partners in South America (e.g. Brazil) be eligible? | For a list of entities eligible for funding, please refer to annex B of the Work Programme, page 9 onwards. You can access this document from the DN 2024 call page of the Funding and Tenders portal, under General conditions. |
| Can UN organisations be partners? | Yes, UN organisations can participate as Associated Partners. |
| Are universities from USA able to participate as partners? To what extend? | USA is not listed in the list of Third countries allowed to receive automatic EU funding under Horizon Europe. If they participate as beneficiaries, the expert evaluators will assess their role and contribution and decide if an exceptional funding is justified or not. If the exceptional funding request is not granted, the experts will assess the proposal as if the concerned entities were participating with their own funds. Moreover, entities located in USA can participate as Associated Partners. |
| Is it possible to have an End-Users Group (EUG) such as in the Horizon Projects? Would supporting letters from the EUG be considered in the evaluation? | It is possible to have End-Users groups, or any external advisory body in an application. No letter of intent would be needed, but their role and composition would need to be described in the proposal. |
| Can we mix academic and industrial partners? The industrial partners have to become full beneficiaries and host a doctoral candidate (DC)? | It is possible for non-academic partners to be beneficiaries and host the DC. In that case they need to be the ones recruiting the DC and offering them a contract. |

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| How many partners from the same country are allowed? | It depends on the total budget allocated to the country as it cannot exceed 40% of the total budget of the project. |
| To which panel we apply with interdisciplinary project combining social sciences and medicine? | The choice of the panel is the responsibility of the applicant. Please check the list of MSCA keywords for each panel: the first keyword selected in the application must belong to the submission panel. The other keywords can be from other panels. REA will ensure an appropriate coverage of the expertise needed to assess all aspects of the proposal. |
| The Consortium of the Beneficiaries is it possible to include only Universities or is it advisable to include also for instance several Industrial Organizations? | The composition of your consortium should fit within the overall objectives of your project. However, the participation of entities (as beneficiary or associated partner) from the non-academic sector (wider than industrial partners) is highly encouraged for standard DNs and JDs. For IDs, it is mandatory to include participants from the non-academic sector (as beneficiary or associated partner) since the Doctoral Candidates will need to spend at least 50% of their fellowship in this sector. |
| Is it possible to have a Joint doctorate with a European country and a non-EU country? | In the 2024 call, it is now possible for a DC to be enrolled in a joint/double/multiple doctoral degree delivered by entities from minimum 1 EU Member State or Horizon Europe associated country. |
| In case of a 5 members Uni Consortium the 5 PhD Students is possible to work in the same research PhD Thesis and each one of them be responsible in a different part of the Thesis? Or the 5 PhD students should have 5 different PhD Theses? | Each DC must be enrolled in a doctoral degree, which will lead to their own doctoral degree. |
| If you were graded with 75% for the call of 2023, we need to substantially change the proposal, for a new submission? I re-submission is only possible in 2025? | Yes, if you submitted a proposal for the DN 2023 call, and had a score below 80, you cannot resubmit a similar proposal in 2024, but you can resubmit it in the DN2025 call. |
| Will the field of management project be assessed by ECO scientific panel or SOC scientific panel? | Please check the MSCA list of keywords. There is a link to the list of MSCA descriptors in the guide for applicants, that you can find on the DN2024 call page of the Funding and Tenders portal. |
| DN-JD: is a joint or double degree of two universities within the same MS or AC permitted? | The new flexibility measure for JDs has not been introduced to have joint or double degrees within the same MS/AC. This would not be in the spirit of the action and such cases may be penalised accordingly by the expert evaluators. |

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| Which costs can be claimed by associated partners? | Associated partners cannot directly claim costs to the EU, but the institutional costs can be redistributed amongst the consortium and the associated partners to cover project contributions e.g., training costs, or costs for hosting secondments. This will need to be defined in the consortium agreement between the partners. This should not be explained in the proposal. |
| The 70% recruiting committee for the resubmission is only valid for a score under 80% correct? | Yes, resubmission restrictions apply only to similar proposals that received a score below 80% in the previous call. |
| If we had more than 80%, we can resubmit in this call and apply as a resubmission without restrictions? Or we are only eligible as a resubmission if more than 70% of the consortium is the same? Or should be something else? | If your proposal scored more than 80%, you can resubmit to the DN-2024 call without any restriction. |
| EURAXESS - is it mandatory to publish MSCA DN positions in EURAXESS?? | It is indeed mandatory to publish all the Doctoral Candidate positions on Euraxess. |
| In case of DN-JD, can non-academic partner be a beneficiary to hire the fellow for 4 years? If not, if a fellow is hired by a university, can the non-academic partner receive any financial support or claim costs when hosting the fellow? | Non-academic entities can be beneficiaries in a DN-JD, provided that they host and supervise the DC, and that their DC is enrolled in a joint/double/multiple doctoral degree. |
| Is the number of beneficiaries (companies/institutions/universities) impacting the acceptance of the proposals? Is consortium of 7 more likely to win than consortium of 3 beneficiaries? Assuming the same excellence and other criteria... | The size of the consortium must be commensurate to the scope of the proposed project. Some proposals have large consortia, while others have smaller consortia, and it does not affect their chances of funding. |
| There is a cap on 350 pm for 'Standard' Doctoral Networks as opposed to 540 for the other two type, correct? The slides seemed to suggest 540 pm for all? | For the call DN-2024, it is 540PM for all (DN, ID & JD). |
| Are costs related with university fees eligible? Most universities require payment of fee for PhD enrolment. Who pays the fees, the doctoral candidates or the beneficiaries host institution? Thank you | The so-called "tuition fees" are eligible costs and must be covered by the budget of the project (not by the Doctoral Candidates) |

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| <p>In case a non-academic partner is a beneficiary in a DN-ID, they need to co-supervise the doctoral candidate. Are there restrictions on the 'level' of the supervisor? E.g. Dr.? Or regarding the research activities/level within the company?</p> | <p>There are no restrictions on the education level of the supervisors, but the qualification and supervision experience of supervisors is evaluated under the excellence criterion. Evaluators also take into account the specificities of the non-academic sector, and non-academic sector evaluators are used to better evaluate these aspects for industrial doctorates.</p> |
| <p>Is it possible that consortium has two connected beneficiaries? Let's say that employee (postdoc, prof.) employed at university but also owner (co-founder) spinoff, write proposal from university side, but his spinoff is also beneficiary?</p> | <p>Yes, it is possible, and it must be declared at submission stage.</p> |
| <p>Hello, is it possible to add a beneficiary in our consortium who is already engaged as a beneficiary in another MSCA DN?</p> <p>Thank you</p> | <p>Yes, it is usual to have an institution/private company involved in several MSCA projects. Of course, we will not allow any double funding of the same activity, which are checked using similarity tools.</p> |
| <p>How many PIs should be involved (size of the network and how many DC's can principally be funded)?</p> | <p>Each recruited Doctoral Candidate must have a supervisor. A supervisor can follow more than one Doctoral Candidate. Please note that supervision arrangements, including the supervisors FTE time dedication to each Doctoral Candidate, will be assessed by the evaluators.</p> |
| <p>Can PI's fund two DC's?</p> | <p>Yes, it is usual to have an institution/private company hosting more than 1 Doctoral Candidate. Pay attention to the budget that cannot exceed 40% of the total project's budget for one single country.</p> |
| <p>In case JD DCs are appointed for 48 months each, is the total of the program still the maximum of 540 PM? So, results in fewer DCs?</p> | <p>The maximum size of DN-JD is 540 pm.</p> |
| <p>where can we find the template of pre-agreement for DN-JD?</p> | <p>The pre-agreement letter template is in the application form template, that you can find in the documents section of the DN 2024 call page of the Funding and Tenders portal.</p> |
| <p>Is it still possible to plan multiple recruitment for a same Doctoral Candidate in a regular DN project?</p> | <p>Yes, it is possible to have one Doctoral Candidate recruited by several entities sequentially.</p> |
| <p>For a researcher in a DN-JD, can we have one of the two degrees awarded by an associated partner (not a beneficiary)?</p> | <p>Yes, it is possible for associated partners to be the doctoral degree awarding entities.</p> |

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| <p>Since 2023, we do not need to provide letters of commitment from associated partners. However, if we have them, can we include them, and will they be considered?</p> | <p>Letters of commitment will not be considered in the evaluation.</p> |
| <p>What is the exact meaning of the candidate (not PhD at recruitment)? Is that meaning before the submission? We have a candidate who will be awarded PhD next week.</p> | <p>The Doctoral Candidate (DC) should not have a PhD at the time they are recruited as a fellow in the project. Furthermore, they have to be recruited following an open, transparent, and merit-based procedure, and this can be audited.</p> |
| <p>Are they some recommendations regarding the exposure of doctoral candidates to the non-academic sector? Do you recommend industrial secondments of minimal duration for all researchers? Does it apply also for DN-JD?</p> | <p>The contribution of the non-academic sector should be commensurate to the implementation mode and to the research field, so there are no universal recommendations for the exposure of the DCs to the non-academic sector.</p> |
| <p>Let's say that employee (postdoc, prof.) employed at university but also owner (co-founder) spinoff, write proposal from university side, can the PhD be sent on secondment to the mentioned spinoff?</p> | <p>Yes, it could be a possibility as long as it fits within the overall research proposal and for the concerned Doctoral Candidates. This will be part of the expert evaluators' assessment.</p> |
| <p>Is there a maximum number of entities that can be involved in a single project?</p> | <p>Consortium in DN projects must include at least three independent legal entities, each established in a different EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country and with at least one of them established in an EU Member State. Should none of them be entitled to award a doctoral degree, a university or a consortium/grouping of academic/research institutions entitled to award a doctoral degree must be added to the project as an associated partner or an associated partner linked to a beneficiary. Please note that each beneficiary must recruit at least one Doctoral Candidate, which may limit the number of beneficiaries. There is no limit to the number of associated partners.</p> |
| <p>Would be participation of an oil&gas company considered as a non-academic sector for DN-ID?</p> | <p>If the status of your entity is a private for-profit entity, it will be considered as a non-academic entity. Please also check when registering your entity in the participant registry.</p> |
| <p>What is the status of Canada (recently an agreement was signed between EU and Canada, but I am not sure if the agreement qualifies Canada as an associated country)?</p> | <p>Canada is not listed in the list of Third countries allowed to receive automatic EU funding and is not an associated country to the pillar 1 of Horizon Europe (Excellent Science). If they participate as beneficiaries, the expert evaluators will assess their role and contribution and decide if an exceptional funding is justified or not. If the</p> |

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| | <p>exceptional funding request is not granted, the experts will assess the proposal as if the concerned entities were participating with their own funds. Moreover, entities located in Canada can participate as Associated Partners.</p> |
| <p>As an “excellence” sub-criterion (in the evaluation criteria) there are the quality of the training programme and supervision. What are the criteria to evaluate these?</p> | <p>The quality of the training programme will be assessed by the evaluators based on the scope of the proposal, the extent to which it underpins the work to be done within the project, the extent to which it includes transferable skills, inter/multidisciplinary and intersectoral training in support of the DCs development. The quality of the supervision is assessed according to the required sub-headings in the submission form (Qualifications and supervision experience of supervisors; Quality of supervision arrangements for DN; Quality of the mandatory joint supervision arrangements (for DN-ID and DN-JD)). We invite you to read the MSCA guidelines on supervision, for which there is a link in the submission template, that you can find on the DN2024 call page of the Funding and Tenders portal.</p> |
| <p>What is the expected composition of the Supervisory Board? I thought it needed to be composed of one representative per partner, but the table included in Part B2 section 6 listing the DC supervisors is confusing me.</p> | <p>The supervisory board should be composed of at least all the supervisors from the project. There are no further specific requirements, except that its composition makes it suitable to address its function of coordinating network-wide training, research and in particular supervision activities in line with the Guidelines for MSCA supervision, while establishing continuous communication and exchange of best practice among the participating organisations to maximise the benefits of the partnership. The table from part B2 is there to keep track of which supervisors supervise which DC.</p> |
| <p>I am sorry. I missed the first part. Can Japan and Korea be also beneficiaries? Or can they be counted as parties but funded by their local governments? They will recruiting their own candidates.</p> | <p>These countries are not listed in the list of Third countries allowed to receive automatic EU funding. If they participate as beneficiaries, the expert evaluators will assess their role and contribution and decide if an exceptional funding is justified or not. If the exceptional funding request is not granted, the experts will assess the proposal as if the concerned entities were participating with their own funds. Moreover, entities located in these countries can participate as Associated Partners.</p> |
| <p>How to cover the high enrolment fees for doctoral candidates in some countries, for instance in the case of joint/double doctorates between universities in EU MS and Canada/US/...?</p> | <p>The enrolment fees/tuition fees are supposed to be covered by the budget of the project (cost category B.1-Research training and networking contribution). Those fees cannot be charged to the recruited Doctoral Candidate.</p> |

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| <p>Is there an age limit for PIs? Can somebody still be PI if they retire within the duration of the proposed DN?</p> | <p>There is no age-limit for PIs but keep in mind that the PIs should still be active in research in order to appropriately supervise the Doctoral Candidates. A co-supervision can also be envisaged to ensure a proper supervision throughout the project. These supervision aspects will be assessed by the expert evaluators.</p> |
| <p>Can a Swiss institution participate as a beneficiary to DN 2024?</p> | <p>Switzerland is not listed in the list of Third countries allowed to receive automatic EU funding. If they participate as beneficiaries, the expert evaluators will assess their role and contribution and decide if an exceptional funding is justified or not. If the exceptional funding request is not granted, the experts will assess the proposal as if the concerned entities were participating with their own funds. Moreover, entities located in Switzerland can participate as Associated Partners. This should be clearly explained in the proposal part B including table 3.1e.</p> |
| <p>Still do not understand the reassessment procedure of a resubmitted proposal. If it resembles the old proposal to an extend of 70% it may be rejected?</p> | <p>The 70% similarity level will be checked on the consortium composition. Then, the scientific objectives may be checked with the support of external experts to assess if the 2 proposals can be considered similar or not. The analysis will then be discussed by an Eligibility Committee who will conclude on the eligibility or ineligibility of the proposal.</p> |
| <p>You said that partners can be all over the world, but then you said something on low-income countries that could lower the score we did not understand. Why could it have a negative effect if you have partner low-income country?</p> | <p>There is a list of third countries (i.e., non-EU countries) and not associated to Horizon Europe from which entities are eligible to participate and get funded. Please refer to annex B of the Work Programme, page 9 onwards. You can access this document from the DN2024 call page of the Funding and Tenders portal, under General conditions. These entities can fully participate, and this has no impact on the evaluation. Please note, however, that the DCs recruited in entities from third countries still need to be enrolled in a doctoral degree from at least one entity from an EU Member State or Associated Country (EU MS/AC). For a DN-JD, these DCs can be enrolled in a joint/double/multiple doctoral degree in at least 1 EU MS/AC, the other PhD awarding entity can therefore be in a third country. For a standard DN or a DN-ID, it is possible for the DC to be enrolled in a double/joint/multiple degree like for a DN-JD, or they would need to be enrolled at another project partner from an EU MS/AC.</p> |
| <p>May I ask who can apply? Can an individual person who is not a PhD candidate can apply?</p> | <p>An individual researcher cannot apply to the Doctoral Networks call. Individuals looking to be recruited as a Doctoral Candidate in a running DN project should look</p> |

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| | for such positions on the Euraxess website. |
| How can individual researchers from Brazil participate in proposals for a Doctoral Network MSCA? | Eligible Doctoral Candidates can be from all over the world, there is no nationality restriction. |
| Does one need to allocate specific months/person for supervisors/beneficiaries? | The funding that you can request from a DN proposal in the budget table from part A only covers the person months of the Doctoral Candidate (DC). DCs should be appropriately supervised, and the FTE dedication of the supervisors to the project should be described in part B2. |
| I am owner of university spinoff, but not employed at the spinoff (I work as researcher at university). Can I be considered as supervisor for PhDs in MSCA DN in this spinoff? | For very small private entities, some additional financial and operational capacity checks may be performed during the Grant Agreement Preparation phase, should the proposal be selected for funding. Regarding the supervision arrangements, additional clarification may also be requested. All these aspects may also be assessed by the expert evaluators during the evaluation under the Implementation criterion. |
| The Grant Agreement (when an MSCA-DN project is funded) details the duties and requirements of Beneficiaries and Partners. What documents -extensively- detail the same duties and requirements that have to be followed by DCs? | Once the fellows are recruited, the coordinator send them the "Information Package for MSCA fellows" |
| Do the DCs still have to be enrolled as PhDs and employed as researchers? This causes double charges as student fees plus overheads which have to come out of the RTN budget. | Each recruited Doctoral Candidate must receive an employment contract and the beneficiary must ensure that they enjoy at the place of the recruitment/hosting at least the same standards and working conditions as those applicable to local researchers holding a similar position. |
| Are you going to discuss postdoc as well during today's info session? | No, this Call Info event is focused on MSCA Doctoral Network only. For Postdoctoral Fellowships, we invite you to consult the dedicated call page on the Funding and Tenders Portal. |
| Let me be very practical: do the Swiss doctorates contribute to the 540 months count? | No, the Doctoral Candidates recruited by a Swiss entity will not be covered by the budget of the project but by their own funds. This should be clearly explained in part B of the proposal, including in table 3.1e. |
| It is suggested times that Mgmt & indirect are used to fund Associated partners -but Mgmt & indirect amount to maximum 19 % - this is lower than the standard HE overhead at 25%. As university we also must cofinance the | Both budget categories B1 (research, training and Networking costs) and B2 (Management and overheads) can be used to fund Associated Partners. These discussions should be internal to the consortium and be part of the consortium agreement. |

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| full tuition fee | |
| Is the part-time working pattern for professional reasons allowed for the fellows? | No, this is not allowed for DN action. Part-time work is allowed only for family/personal or medical reasons. |
| Is it evaluation-wise a disadvantage to apply for more than 15 DCs - with additional money coming from external (Swiss) funding? | The expert evaluators are briefed to assess the proposals according to the MSCA DN evaluation criteria. They will also duly consider the size and scope of the project. |
| regarding the composition of the consortium, could you please clarify the differences in terms of budget assigned between "Associated Partners linked to a beneficiary," "Associated Partners," and "Beneficiaries"? | Only the beneficiaries can request EU funding (and recruit Doctoral Candidates in the part A of the proposal). The Associated Partners and Associated Partners linked to a beneficiary can indirectly request some budget through redistribution of the institutional costs, but this is internal to the consortium and should be part of the consortium agreement. Such budget redistribution plans should not be explained in the proposal. |
| If we had more than 80%, we can resubmit in this call and apply as a resubmission without restrictions? Or we are only eligible as a resubmission if more than 70% of the consortium is the same? Or should be something else? | If your proposal scored more than 80%, you can resubmit to the DN-2024 call without any restriction. |
| What does the 70% similarity mean for a resubmitted proposal? Can it be rejected because it is too similar? | The 70% similarity level will be checked on the consortium composition. Then, the scientific objectives may be checked with the support of external experts to assess if the 2 proposals can be considered similar or not. The analysis will then be discussed by an Eligibility Committee who will conclude on the eligibility or ineligibility of the proposal. |
| Can Part A show more than 540PMs? (e.g., doctoral student has secondments at other beneficiaries) | The part A is limited to 540 person-months. Secondments should not be introduced as "recruitment" periods. Secondments should be described in the part B of the proposal. |
| What happens at evaluation stage if one of the reviewers clearly does not like the proposal for no scientific reasons, but the others are highly positive about it. Will it be disregarded as being potentially biased? | All expert evaluators are briefed to assess the proposals only against MSCA DN evaluation criteria. They are also briefed on the importance to assess without any bias. The consensus phase allows all expert evaluators to share their assessment, discuss and resolve any divergent points, with the support of the rapporteur and moderator. REA staff also ensures the fairness and transparency of the process at each evaluation step. A 4th expert can also be assigned to |

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| | the proposal in case of difficult consensus or specific issues. |
| For JD, does the joint doctorate needs to be fully in place already at the time of proposal submission? Or the specifics can be worked out once/if the proposal is funded? | We highly encourage all JD applicants to already advance on the agreements and administrative arrangements since it takes time. The letters of pre-agreement (template provided) must be in the proposal and are an eligibility condition. The formal agreement to establish the joint/double/multiple research doctoral degree is due by month 6 after the project start. |
| Does the candidate have to get recruited and enrolled in PhD programme at the same moment? Or is it e.g., possible to employ the candidate in June and enrol them in October? (Some universities allow formal enrolment to start only in Oct.) | Yes, it is possible to agree with the REA Project Officer on a slight delay but keep in mind that this will be checked at the latest during the Progress Report at M12-13 of the project, and also during the mid-term check meeting with the REA Project Officer and the consortium. |
| Is there a possibility that doctoral student with engineering degree can apply? | Supported researchers must be Doctoral Candidates, i.e., not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of the recruitment. Since they will have to be enrolled in a PhD programme, they should have a diploma that will allow them to embark in a PhD. These specific requirements may vary from one country to another. |
| In section 1.4 from template part B1, what is expected to fill in the following required sub-headings: Quality of supervision arrangements for DN. Thank you! | In this section, you should explain how the supervision of the fellows will be organised. We invite you to read the MSCA guidelines on supervision. |
| Are there any specific regulations on how one should approach using AI in writing the proposal? | Please refer to the Guidance on the use of generative AI tools for the preparation of the proposal. Your description can be added under the Ethics section of the proposal. |
| You mentioned that in a DN-JD you need to joint governance. Does it mean that you should have two coordinators? | The joint governance for DN-JD means that for each fellow enrolled in a joint/double/multiple doctoral degree, there should be joint governance of this fellow's project by all the entities in which the fellow is enrolled. For any given DN proposal, there should only be one coordinator. |
| Guidance on the use of generative AI tools for the preparation of the proposal states that Applicants (...) must be transparent in disclosing which AI tools were used and how they were utilized. | It can be explained under the ethics section of the proposal. |

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| Where in the application should this be described? | |
| Is it possible to indicate more than two tutor for a PhD program, of which two from the recruiting institution? | There is no limitation in the number of supervisors, co-supervisors/tutors. It should be clearly explained and justified in the proposal. It will be then up to the expert evaluators to assess these aspects against the evaluation criteria during the proposal evaluation. |