European Commission

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

**PART 1 (14:10 – 14:30):
MSCA: Training, Mobility & Career Development Opportunities for Reserchers**

Sohail LUKA, PhD
European Commission
DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Unit

MSCA InfoDay, 01/12/2025, Cairo

Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions

Horizon Europe

EURATOM

EU FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION

**Pillar I
EXCELLENT SCIENCE**

European Research Council

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

Research Infrastructures

**Pillar II
GLOBAL CHALLENGES &
EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL
COMPETITIVENESS**

Clusters

- Health
- Culture, Creativity &
Inclusive Society
- Civil Security for Society
- Digital, Industry & Space
- Climate, Energy & Mobility
- Food, Bioeconomy, Natural
Resources, Agriculture &
Environment

Joint Research Centre

**Pillar III
INNOVATIVE EUROPE**

European Innovation
Council

European Innovation
Ecosystems

European Institute of
Innovation & Technology*

Fusion

Fission

Joint
Research
Center

2021-2027

WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA

Widening participation & spreading excellence

Reforming & Enhancing the European R&I system

Budget: EUR 95.5 billion

European Commission

Pillar I: Excellent Science

Reinforcing and extending the excellence of the Union's science base

European Research Council

Frontier research by the best researchers and their teams

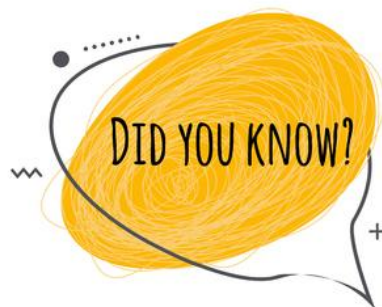**€16 billion**

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions

Equipping researchers with new knowledge and skills through mobility and training

€6.6 billion

Research Infrastructures

Integrated and inter-connected world-class research infrastructures

€2.4 billion

DID YOU KNOW?

23 Nobel Prize winners either backed by or involved in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions between 2012 and 2025

European Commission

Key features

Researchers' training, skills and career development (all stages of career)

Excellent research in all domains (bottom-up approach)

International, cross-sectoral & interdisciplinary mobility

Attractive working and employment conditions

Structuring impact on organisations through excellent programmes
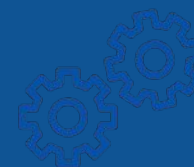
Strong collaboration beyond academia

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The Actions

Doctoral Networks

Doctoral programmes in and outside academia incl. joint & industrial doctorates

Postdoctoral Fellowships

Support to excellent postdoctoral researchers

Staff Exchanges

Support for research and innovation staff exchanges

COFUND

Co-funding doctoral and postdoctoral programmes

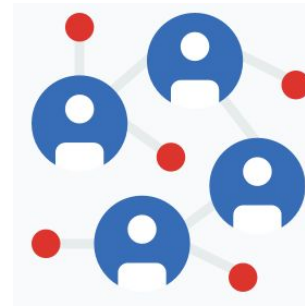**MSCA and Citizens**

Public outreach events (Night)
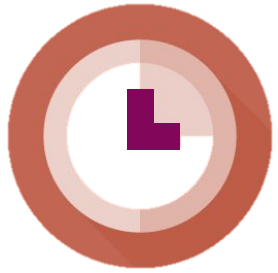
European Commission

MSCA Doctoral Networks

DURATION
4 years (5 years for Joint Doctorates)

COMPOSITION
Min 3 organisations in 3 different EU MS or HE AC (at least 1 MS)

FELLOWSHIP
Between 3 and 36 months (3-48 months for Joint Doctorates)

BUDGET
540 Person/Month
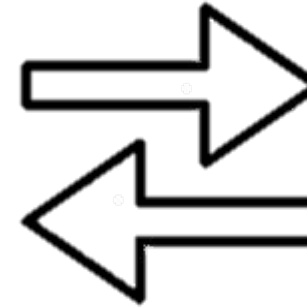
European Commission

Post-Doctoral Fellowships

European Fellowship

For fellows coming to EU MS / HE AC "incoming"

or

moving within EU MS / HE AC "intra-European"

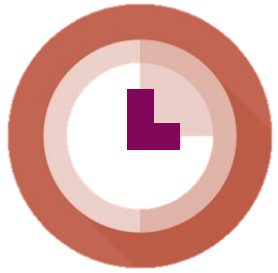**12-24 months**

Global Fellowship

12-24 months

12 months

For fellows from Europe **going to third countries**

and then **returning to Europe/HE AC**

+ 6 months in non-academic sector in MS/AC (optional)

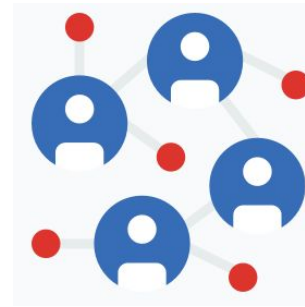European Commission

MSCA Staff Exchanges

DURATION
4 years

COMPOSITION
Min 3 organisations
in 3 different
countries (min. 2 EU
MS or HE AC)

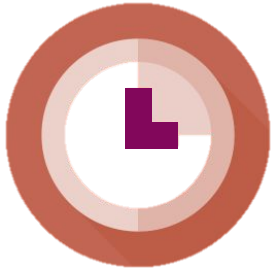**SECONDMENTS**
1-12 months per staff

BUDGET
Max EUR 1.6 million
(360 PM per project)

European Commission

MSCA COFUND

DURATION
Max 5 years

COMPOSITION
1 beneficiary from EU
MS or HE AC

FELLOWSHIP
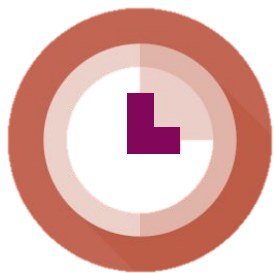For doctoral and
postdoctoral researchers
for minimum 3 months

BUDGET
Co-funding
Max EUR 10 million per
beneficiary per call

European
Commission

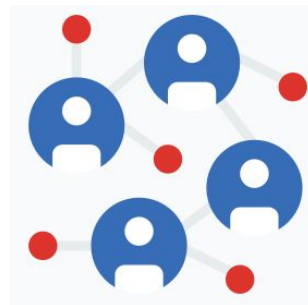# COFUND Pilot: MSCA Choose Europe for Science

DURATION

2-3 years first phase
2 years second
phase

COMPOSITION

1 beneficiary from
EU MS or HE AC

RECRUITMENT

For at least 3
researchers at
postdoctoral level

BUDGET

Co-funding with a
front-loaded EU
contribution
Max EUR 3.5 million
per beneficiary per call

European Commission

Value of MSCA for Egyptian Organisations & Researchers

- Boosting **training and careers** of Egypt's researchers

- Becoming part of a **large network** with Europe and the world

- Broadening Access to **research resources** and amplifying profesional contacts

- Building stable and **lasting international collaborations** at institutional level

- Triggering a positive ripple **effect on R&I policies** in participating institutions

- Generate **innovation outputs** (patents, start-ups, etc.)

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Egypt's Participation in MSCA So Far

Egypt's Participation in Horizon 2020 MSCA (2014-2020)

- Projects Awarded: **14** projects (86% of them in Staff Exchange)

- Number of participations by Egyptian Organisations: **15** (by 11 organisations)

- Top fields: Engineering and Social Sciences

- Egyptian researchers benefiting from MSCA: **280**

- Top Destinations: Italy, Netherlands, Spain

European Commission

Egypt's Participation in Horizon Europe Calls so far: 2021-2024

- **17** <u>successful projects</u> (+ 2 Coordination & Support Actions):
  - 13 Staff Exchange projects
  - 3 Doctoral Networks
  - 1 Global Post-Doctoral Fellowship
- **21** <u>successful participations</u> by **15** distinct organisations
- <u>Top fields</u>: Social Sciences, Engineering and Life Sciences
- <u>Top Participants</u>: Ain Shams Univ. and American Univ. in Cairo (3 projects each)
- <u>Funds received</u>: **EUR 2.2 M**

European Commission

Reflecting on Egypt's MSCA Participation

- Egypt advancing remarkably in both Quantity & Quality:
  - ✔ Quantity: Already surpased H2020 and with 3 more calls to go
  - ✔ Quality: 3 Doctoral Networks vs zero in H2020
- This upwards pattern Will improve even further with Egypt's

  Association to Horizon Europe

- Non-academic participation, including private sector is low

- No incoming researchers for post-doctoral fellowships in Egypt

European Commission

WP2026-2027 relevant novelties*

- Relaxing rules on duration of secondments (DN/PF/COFUND)

- Significant simplification for Staff Exchanges eligibility conditions

- Abolishing the "1 month rule" for Staff Exchanges

- Simplify MSCA proposal template for all actions

- Adjusting financial aspects to inflation

*: Pending formal adoption of WP2026-2027

European Commission

Year	Action	Opening*	Deadline*
2025	Doctoral Networks	28 May 2025	25 November 2025
	Postdoctoral Fellowships	9 April 2025	10 September 2025
	Staff Exchanges	27 March 2025	8 Octorber 2025
	COFUND	23 January 2025	24 June 2025
	COFUND-Choose Europe	1 October 2025	3 December 2025
2026	Doctoral Networks	28 May 2026	24 November 2026
	Postdoctoral Fellowships	9 April 2026	9 September 2026
	Staff Exchanges	16 December **2025**	16 April 2026
	Staff Exchanges	15 December 2026	15 April 2027
	COFUND	16 December **2025**	8 April 2026
	COFUND	8 December 2026	6 April 2027
	COFUND: Choose Europe	8 December 2026	6 April 2027

*: Pending the formal adoption of WP2026-2027

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Thank you!

HorizonEU #MSCA

@MSCActions

https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

PART 2 (14:30 – 15:15):
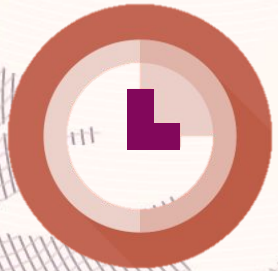**Focus on MSCA Staff Exchanges (SE) &**
MSCA Doctoral Networks (DN)

Sohail LUKA, PhD
European Commission
DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Unit

MSCA InfoDay, 01/12/2025, Cairo
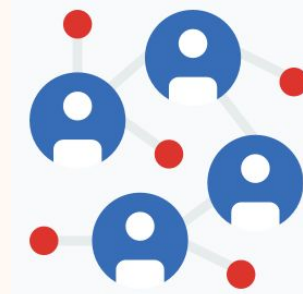
MSCA Staff Exchanges (SE)

MSCA Staff Exchanges

DURATION
4 years

COMPOSITION
Min 3 organisations in 3
≠ countries (min. 2 EU
MS or HE AC)

SECONDMENTS
1-12 months per staff

BUDGET
Max 360 PM per project

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Commission

Objectives

International, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary mobility of R&I staff ("secondments")

Knowledge transfer between participating organisations

Collaboration between the academic and non-academic sectors (including SMEs)
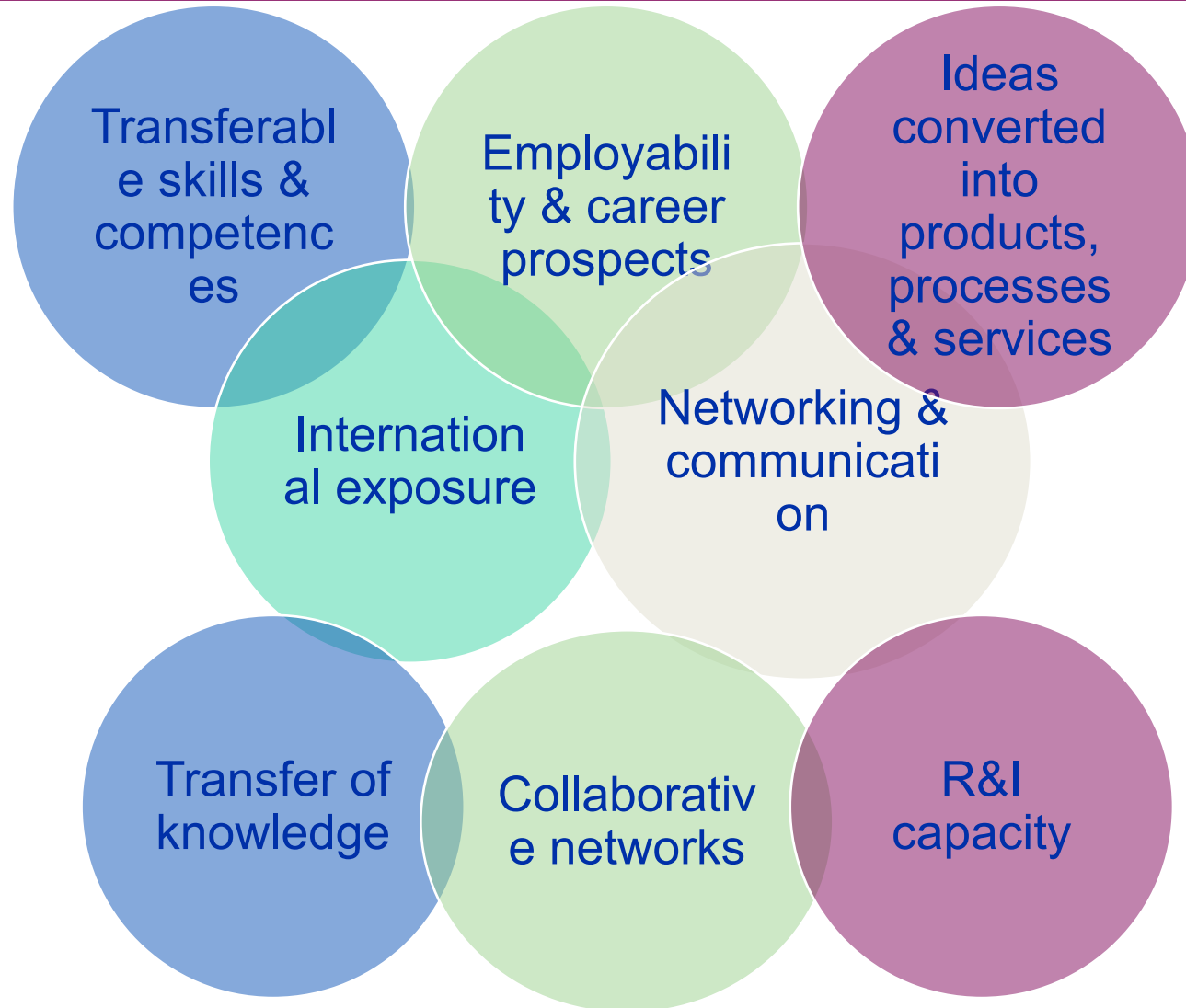
Cooperation across the globe

European Commission
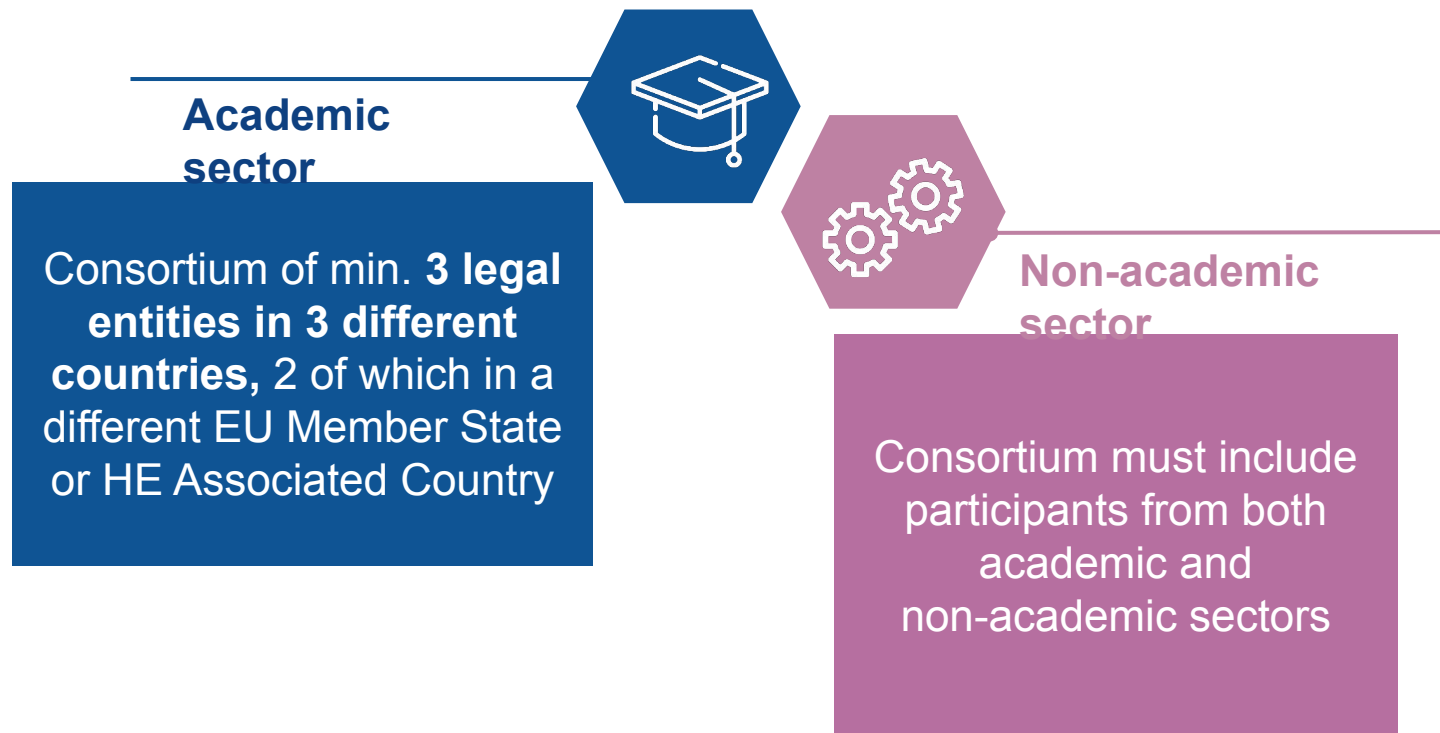
Added value

Staff members

Organisations

Eligible participants

Academic sector

Consortium of min. **3 legal entities in 3 different countries,** 2 of which in a different EU Member State or HE Associated Country

Non-academic sector

Consortium must include participants from both academic and non-academic sectors

*: Pending formal adoption of WP2026-2027

European Commission

Eligible staff

Seconded staff members

Any type of staff involved in R&I activities (researchers, administrative staff, managerial staff, technical staff)

Researchers at any career stage (from doctoral candidates to postdoctoral researchers)

Actively engaged in research and/or innovation activities for at least **1 month** prior at the sending institution*

Each staff member is seconded for a period of **1 to 12 months**

Staff needs to be devoted **full-time** to the action during the secondment

After the secondment, staff should **return to their sending organisation**

* This requirement will be dropped, pending the formal adoption of the MSCA 2026-2027 Work Programme.

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EU contribution*

Unit cost per Person Month
€ 5170

Staff member unit costs
€ 2870

Special needs allowance (if applicable) requested unit

Research, training, networking
€ 1300

Management and indirect costs
€ 1000

1 unit = 1 month of eligible staff

*: Pending formal adoption of WP2026-2027

Novelties in the 2026-2027 Work Programme

Greater flexibility to support 3-way mobility

- **Same-sector secondments** now allowed;
international cooperation strongly encouraged
  - Removal of requirement for a non-associated third country (when all partners were in the same sector)

  - Both academic and non-academic sectors must be involved

- Removal of the **"one-month rule"** before secondment

Skills development

- Enhanced skills development section

Minimum threshold

- New minimum threshold of 3 in each evaluation criteria

Unit cost

- Increased to €2,870 per month

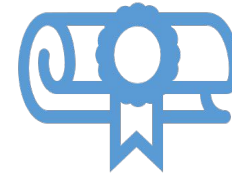*: Pending formal adoption of WP2026-2027

Staff Exchanges - making a difference

WORLD-WIDE
The highest participation of non-EU countries in MSCA

BUSINESS PARTICIPATION
Businesses receive an estimated 30% of the available funding

PATENTS
Significant share of all patents in MSCA actions

SUCCESS RATE
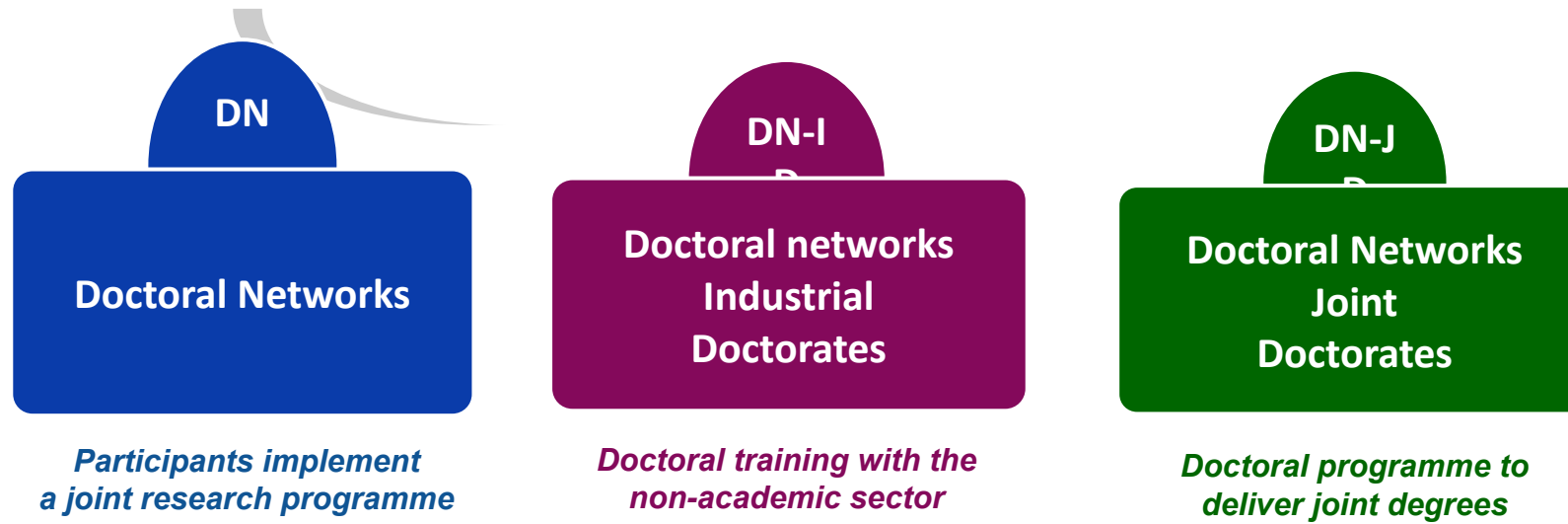Between 20 & 40% depending on the discipline and on the year

European Commission

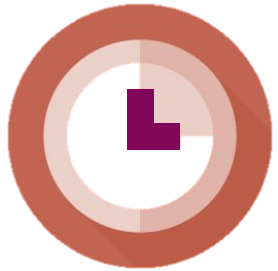# MSCA Doctoral Networks (DN)

What is a Doctoral Network (DN) ?

✔ One consortium

✔ Proposing a research project

✔ With interlinked individual PhD research projects

✔ For doctoral candidates

Implementation modes

DN

Doctoral Networks

DN-I

Doctoral networks Industrial Doctorates

DN-J

Doctoral Networks Joint Doctorates

Participants implement a joint research programme

Doctoral training with the non-academic sector

Doctoral programme to deliver joint degrees

All 3 modes compete within the same scientific panels

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MSCA Doctoral Networks

DURATION
4 years (5 years for Joint Doctorates)

COMPOSITION
Min 3 organisations in 3 different EU MS or HE AC (at least 1 MS)

FELLOWSHIP
Between 3 and 36 months (3-48 months for Joint Doctorates)

BUDGET
540 Person/Month

European Commission
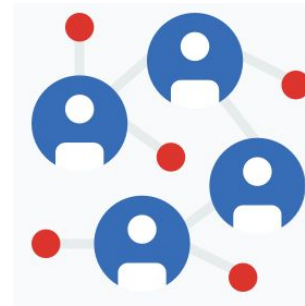
Eligible participants

Who can apply?

✔ Any Legal Entity worldwide

✔ But not all applicants
   are eligible for funding

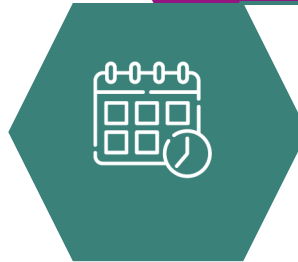**Min. 3 entities from 3 ≠ MS/AC
of which 1 from a MS
as beneficiary**

*No minimum / maximum number of **Associated Partners***

Consortia

✔ Universities, research
   institutions and research
   infrastructures

✔ Businesses including SMEs

✔ Other socio-economic actors

European Commission

Eligible size and duration

Size

✔ Up to **540 person-months for all type of actions**

Duration

✔ **Proposal**: max. 48 months for DN and DN-ID - *incentive for DN-JD **60 months***

✔ **Fellowship**: 3 to 36 months for DN and DN-ID - *incentive for DN-JD **48 months***

✔ **Secondments**: worldwide, any sectors, up to 1/3 of the fellowship duration for Standard DN - incentive for DN-ID and DN-JD **no secondment limitation** – for DN-ID min **50% in non-academic sector**

Other eligibility conditions

All beneficiaries must recruit at least one doctoral candidate, host and supervise in own premises, or use associated partners linked to them to do so

Max. 40% of budget allocated to the same country or to a single international organisation.

Re-submission restrictions for proposals scoring below 80% in the previous year's call

Specific eligibility conditions for Industrial and Joint Doctorates

European Commission

Eligible researchers

Doctoral candidates

✔ **No doctoral degree** at the date of recruitment

✔ **Open, merit-based and transparent recruitment** procedure

✔ **Enrolled in a PhD** from min 1 EU MS/AC

✔ Any nationality

✔ fulfill the **MSCA mobility condition:**

DCs must not have resided or carried out their main activity in the country of the recruiting beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before their recruitment date.
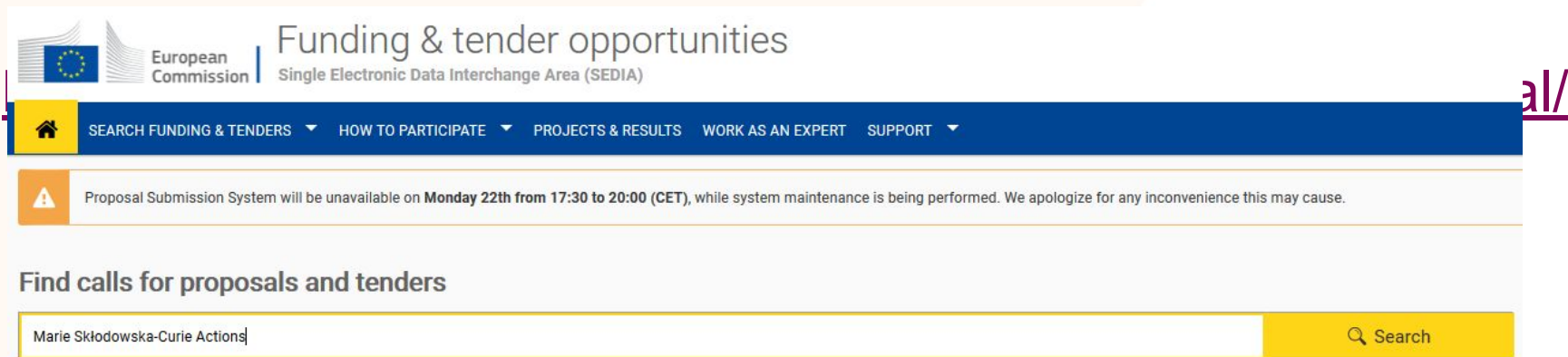
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Cost categories*

	A. Contributions for recruited researchers				B. Institutional contributions	
A1. Living allowance (€)	**A2. Mobility allowance (€)**	**A3. Family allowance (if applicable) (€)**	**A4. Long term leave (if applicable) (€)**	**A5. Special needs (if applicable) (€)**	**B1. Research training and networking contribution (€)**	**B2. Management and indirect contribution (€)**
4250**	710	660	4960 x % covered by the beneficiary	requested unit x 1/ number of PM	1600	1200

*gross amount multiplied by country correction coefficient

*: Pending formal adoption of WP2026-2027

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Funding opportunities

- All calls are published on the **Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal**

- Applications are submitted through the portal:

  - Find your call

  - Sign in to the portal and register your organisation (get a PIC number)

  - Find partners

  - Apply

Looking for a partner?

Some useful resources and links

- Vacancies under MSCA Doctoral Networks and COFUND programmes are published on the <u>Euraxess</u> portal (as well as some offers from host institutions for Postdoctoral Fellowships)

- <u>MSCA Matchmaking platform</u> for researchers and organisation to find relevant partners and host institutions

- "*<u>Partner search</u>*" tool on Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal

- <u>Enterprise Europe Networks</u> (for <u>non-academic partners</u>)

- <u>Seal of Excellence schemes</u> for unsuccessful excellent projects in PF or COFUND

Key resources and guidance

- Check all **guidance documents** available on [Funding and Tenders Portal](#) :

    - Guide for applicants: overview of rules, financial aspects, etc.

    - MSCA Work Programme and annexes

    - Proposal templates

    - Model Grant Agreements

    - Horizon Europe Programme Guide

    - Online manual on how to submit an application

    - Frequently Asked Questions

    - Partner search

- Ask for advice to your **MSCA [National Contact Point](#)** where available

Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.

Marie Skłodowska-Curie

Website

LinkedIn

Thank you!

European Commission