



#HorizonEU

THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

MSCA Doctoral Networks

NCPs' infodays – Latvia, Lithuania,
Poland, and Slovakia

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April 8th, 2025



Content

1. **MSCA Work Programme**
2. MSCA Doctoral Networks
3. Eligibility rules
4. Funding mechanism
5. Overview of evaluation process and evaluation criteria
6. How to find partners and build a consortium
7. Statistics
8. Resources

The MSCA in Horizon Europe



2021-2027

MSCA in Horizon Europe budget: EUR 95.5 billion

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

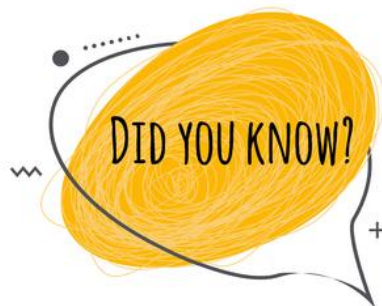
Equipping researchers with new knowledge and skills through mobility and training

€6.6 billion

Research Infrastructures

Integrated and inter-connected world-class research infrastructures

€2.4 billion



12 Nobel Prize winners either backed by or involved in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions between 2012 and 2020



MSCA: A world reference for research and training



Researchers' training, skills and career development (all stage 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 with industry and SMEs



Key figures (2014-2020)

+65,000

Researchers,
including 25,000
PhD candidates

50 % of all third
countries'
participations in H2020
~40% of researchers
from outside of the EU

42%

Female
researchers

+1,000

Doctoral
programmes

Over 5000

Companies
supported

6.5 billion €

Under Horizon
2020

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

1

Doctoral Networks

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

Total budget 2025: € 597.80 million

Opening call: 28/05/2025

DL 25/11/2025

2

Postdoctoral Fellowships

Support to excellent postdoctoral researchers

2025: €404.29 million

Opening call: 08/05/2025

DL 10/09/2025

3

Staff Exchanges

Support for research and innovation staff exchanges

2025: €97.71 million

DL 08/10/2025

4

COFUND

Co-funding doctoral and postdoctoral programmes

2025: €128.06 million

DL 24/06/2025

5

MSCA and Citizens

Public outreach events (Night)

2025: €16.25 million

Opening call: 17/06/2025

DL 22/10/2025





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What is a Doctoral Network (DN) project ?



- One consortium
- Proposing a research project
- With interlinked individual PhD research projects
- For doctoral candidates

MSCA DN Programme Expected Impacts

Strengthening the European Research Area



- Strengthen Europe's human capital base in R&I by training **highly-skilled doctoral candidates**
- Improve the **attractiveness** of researchers' careers in Europe notably through **better working and employment conditions** of doctoral candidates in Europe
- Enhance **talent and knowledge circulation** across the R&I landscape, through **inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary and international mobility**
- Enhance the quality of R&I contributing to Europe's **sustainable competitiveness**
- Establish sustainable **collaboration** between **academic and non-academic** organisations
- Foster the culture of **open science, innovation and entrepreneurship.**

MSCA DN Programme Expected Outcomes



Benefits for both the Doctoral Candidates and Participating Organisations



- Train creative, entrepreneurial, innovative and resilient doctoral candidates
- Expose the researchers to the **academic and non-academic sectors**
- Offer training in research-related, as well as competences relevant for **innovation and long-term employability within and outside academy**
- Focus on **research and transferable skills**, (inter-sectoral secondments), **career development plan, supervision, internationalization / attractiveness**
- Enhanced **cooperation and knowledge transfer** between sectors and disciplines
- Regular feedback of research results into **teaching** and **education**

Doctoral Networks - Academic vs Non-Academic sector

Academic sector

- Public or private higher education establishments
- Public or private non-profit research organisations
- International European Research Organisations



Non-academic sector

- Any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector

Doctoral Networks – participant types

	Beneficiaries	Associated Partners
Academic/Non academic	✓	✓
Signatories of the Grant Agreement	✓	
Recruitment of researchers	✓	
Training and/or hosting of seconded researchers	✓	✓
Participation in Supervisory Board	✓	✓
Directly claim costs	✓	



MSCA-DN – Modes of implementation

Joint Doctorates

- Joint collaborations leading to a joint/multiple doctoral degree;
- Pre-agreement for joint degrees required;
- Joint selection and supervision.

JD

Doctoral
Networks

DN

(Standard)

Industrial Doctorates

- Training in academia and industry.
- Joint supervision.

ID

Doctoral Networks (standard)

Training in academia
and/or industry.

All 3 modes compete within the same scientific panels:

LIF, MAT, PHY, ECO, SOC, CHE,
ENG, ENV

Doctoral Networks – 2024 Features



STANDARD DN

- Up to **540 person-months**
- Project duration: max. **48 months**
- **Fellowship**: min 3 / max 36 months
- **Secondments**: worldwide, up to **1/3** of the fellowship duration



DN-ID

- Up to **540 person-months**
- Project duration: max. **48 months**
- **Fellowship**: min 3 / maximum 36 months
- **No limitation for secondments**
- **Min 50% in the non-academic sector**
- Non-academic sector as **beneficiary or associated partners**
- Academic and non-academic organisations jointly supervise



DN-JD

- Up to **540 person-months**
- Project duration: max. **60 months**
- **Fellowship**: min 3 / max 48 months
- **No limitation for secondments**
- Enrolment in a **joint/double or multiple PhD** (at least 1 MS/AC among the PhD awarding entities)
- Joint admission, selection, training, supervision, governance
- **Mandatory letters of pre-agreement** to deliver joint/double/multi degrees (template)

Doctoral Networks – Novelties since DN 2024



INCREASED UNIT COSTS

The contributions for the recruited researchers have been increased as of DN 2024. More precisely, the **living allowance becomes EUR 4010** (gross amount to be multiplied by CC) and the **mobility allowance becomes EUR 710** per eligible person-month.



RESUBMISSION RESTRICTIONS

As specified in the [MSCA Work Programme 2023-2025](#), any proposal involving 70% or more of the same recruiting organisations as in another proposal submitted to the previous call of the MSCA Doctoral Networks under Horizon Europe that has received a score of less than 80% will be assessed for whether it is a resubmission, irrespective of the applicants' self-declaration.



DN-JD ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

Joint Doctorates (DN-JD) should lead to the delivery of joint, double or multiple doctoral degrees recognised in **at least one** EU Member State (MS) or Horizon Europe Associated Country (AC) (as opposed to minimum two under DN 2023).



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General eligible conditions

- At least **3 independent legal entities**:
 - Each established in a different EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Country
 - Minimum of 1 beneficiary from an EU Member State
 - No minimum / maximum number of Associated Partners
- **All beneficiaries must recruit at least one doctoral candidate.** They are required to host at their premises and supervise recruited researchers, or use associated partners linked to them to do so
- **Not more than 40% of the EU contribution may be allocated to beneficiaries in the same country** or to a single international organisation.

Eligible participants

Who can apply?

- Any Legal Entity worldwide
- But not all applicants are eligible for funding



Consortia

- Universities, research institutions and research infrastructures
- Businesses including SMEs
- Other socio-economic actors

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

Doctoral Networks- Eligible countries



EU COUNTRIES

- Member States (MS) including their outermost regions
- The Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) linked to the MS.



NON-EU COUNTRIES

- Countries associated to Horizon Europe (AC)
- Low- and middle-income countries: See [HE Programme Guide](#).
- Other countries when announced in the call or exceptionally if their participation is essential



SPECIFIC CASES

- Affiliated entities established in countries eligible for funding.
- EU bodies.
- International organisations (IO):
International European research organisations are eligible for funding.
Other IO are not eligible, only exceptionally if their participation is essential or if they are identified in the relevant Horizon Europe Work Programme as being eligible for funding.

* For more detail, please consult the [HE programme guide](#) and the List of [Participating Countries in Horizon Europe](#)



Eligible size and duration

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**



Size

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



Doctoral Networks – Eligible Researchers

- Researchers must be **doctoral candidates** (not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of recruitment)
- Be recruited following an **open, merit-based and transparent recruitment**
- Researchers must be **enrolled in a doctoral programme**, in at least 1 EU Member State/Associated Country
- **Any nationality**
- **Mobility rule:** must not have **resided or carried out main activity** in the country of the recruiting beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before their recruitment date.



Consortium

Summary

- Up to **540 person-months** for all Doctoral Networks modalities.

At least **three** independent legal entities, each established in a different MS or AC; minimum **1 beneficiary from a MS** (no minimum for associated partners).

Each beneficiary must recruit at least 1 DC

Max 40% funding per country

Associated partners contribute to the implementation of the action (i.e. training of researchers, secondments) but may not employ researchers under the action. They do not sign the grant agreement.

Recruitment

Open, fair, transparent, merit-based recruitment. Any nationality

- Eligible researchers must:
 - Comply with the MSCA **mobility rule***
 - **Be Doctoral candidates** (not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of recruitment)
 - They can be of **any nationality**.



* 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.



DN
(Standard)

ID
(Industrial Doctorates)

JD
(Joint Doctorates)

**Project
duration**

48 months

60 months

DC contract

Max 36 months

**Max 36 months (50% in
the non-academic sector)**

Max 48 months

Secondments

**Max 1/3 of the
fellowship**

No limitation of secondment duration

PhD

All DCs enrolled in a PhD from a MS/AC

**Enrolled in
PhD from min.
1 MS/AC**





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Funding mechanism

- Fully based on unit costs
- **1 person-month = 1 unit**
- Total costs = costs per unit x number of units
- 100% Reimbursement rate for eligible beneficiaries
- Different cost categories:
 - Researcher's cost
 - Institutional costs (research, training, networking + management)

**1 unit
=
1 month of
eligible DC**



Doctoral Networks – Funding

Cost Categories

Contributions for recruited researchers Per person-month					Institutional unit contributions Per person-month	
Living allowance	Mobility allowance	Family allowance** (if applicable)	Long-term leave allowance (if applicable)	Special needs allowance (if applicable)	Research, training and networking contribution	Management and indirect contribution
EUR 4010*	EUR 710	EUR 660	EUR 4720 x % covered by the beneficiary	Requested unit ¹ x (1/number of months)	EUR 1600	EUR 1200

*A **country correction coefficient** applies to the living allowance in order to ensure equal treatment and purchasing power parity for all researchers

** A **family allowance** to contribute to mobility-related costs of researchers with family obligations which can be granted during the project.

¹ The pre-defined categories are as follows: EUR 3 000, EUR 4 500, EUR 6 000, EUR 9 500, EUR 13 000, EUR 18 500, EUR 27 500, EUR 35 500, EUR 47 500 and EUR 60 000.



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Overview of Evaluation Process



Doctoral Networks – Award Criteria



Criteria	Excellence	Impact	Implementation
Sub-criteria	Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives	Contribution to structuring doctoral training at European level and strengthening European innovation capacity	Quality and effectiveness of the work plan , assessment of risks , and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages
	Soundness of the proposed methodology	Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives 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	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	The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts	
Weighting	50%	30%	20%
Priority	1	2	3

Doctoral Networks – How to apply?

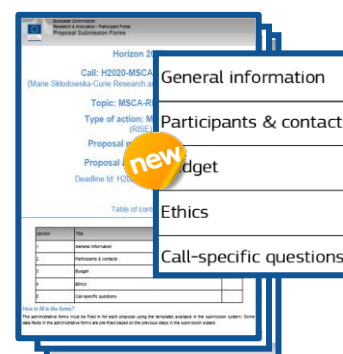


The screenshot shows the EU Funding & Tenders Portal interface. At the top, the European Commission logo is visible. The main navigation bar includes links for Home, Funding, Procurement, Projects & results, and News & events. Below this, a breadcrumb trail reads: Home > Funding > Calls for proposals > MSCA Doctoral Networks 2024. The main heading is "MSCA Doctoral Networks 2024" with the identifier "HORIZON-MSCA-2024-DN-01-01". A "Topic" button labeled "Call for proposal" is present. On the left, an "Internal navigation" sidebar lists: General information, Topic description, Topic updates, Mission, Destination, and Conditions and documents. The main content area under "General information" shows: Programme: Horizon Europe (HORIZON); Call: MSCA Doctoral Networks 2024 (HORIZON-MSCA-2024-DN-01-01); Type of action: HORIZON-TMA-MSCA-DN-ID HORIZON TMA MSCA Doctoral Networks - Industrial Doctorates; and Deadline model: single-stage.

Useful documents

- DN 2025 Guide for Applicants - available in the F&T Portal as of **May 28th**
- Proposal templates - available in the F&T Portal as of **May 28th**
- [Horizon Europe MSCA Work Programme 2023-2025](#)
- [F&T Manual on how to submit a proposal](#)
- Topic Q&A under [F&T portal](#)

Part A (structured data)



Part B (description of action)



Part B1: 30 pages
Part B2: no limit

Doctoral Networks – Proposal preparation



- Read the **MSCA Work Programme** and **Guidance documents**
- Use the **proposal template**
- Read carefully the **evaluation form**
- Don't **underestimate** any part of the proposal
- Write **each section** clearly and in coherence with all sections in the proposal
- Perform an '**internal**' **peer-review** with your consortium partners
- Consult your **National Contact Points**
- Duly complete **Part A**
- Start preparing early and **don't leave submission for the last minute**

Think like an evaluator + Write for an evaluator

Proposal preparation – DN 2025 Call Info Day



When: June 24th, 2025

Where: ONLINE via RTD platform



Horizon Europe - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Doctoral Networks 2025 - Call info day

- Join us live or watch the recording on this [platform](#).
- To attend, simply sign up or log in. By clicking the “I’m interested” button, the event will be added to your list
- Review all the [call related documents](#) available as of **May 29th**
- Send us your questions before June 20th at www.Slido.com with the code **#DN2025**
- For more details on the programme, please consult the [MSCA 2025 Call Info event page](#).



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How to build a consortium and find partners



Build a consortium:

Consortium

- **Academic institutions**
(universities, research institutes)
- **Non-academic organizations**
(companies, SMEs, NGOs, public bodies)



Definition of roles and requirements

- Identify the coordinator
- Ensure that partners have complementary expertise
- Define the scientific focus and training plan in line with the Doctoral Networks objectives.
- Clearly outline the training program, secondments, and impact.

How to find partners and build a consortium



Find partners:

Networking Platforms and Tools

- [EU Funding & Tenders Portal- Partner search functionality](#)
- [CORDIS](#)
- [EURAXESS | Research in motion](#)
- [Enterprise Europe Network](#)
- [National Contact Points \(NCPs\)](#)



Developing networking activities

- [Horizon Europe Info Days](#)
- [Brokerage events | EURAXESS](#)
- [MSCA networking events](#)
- [MCAA Alumni Association](#)

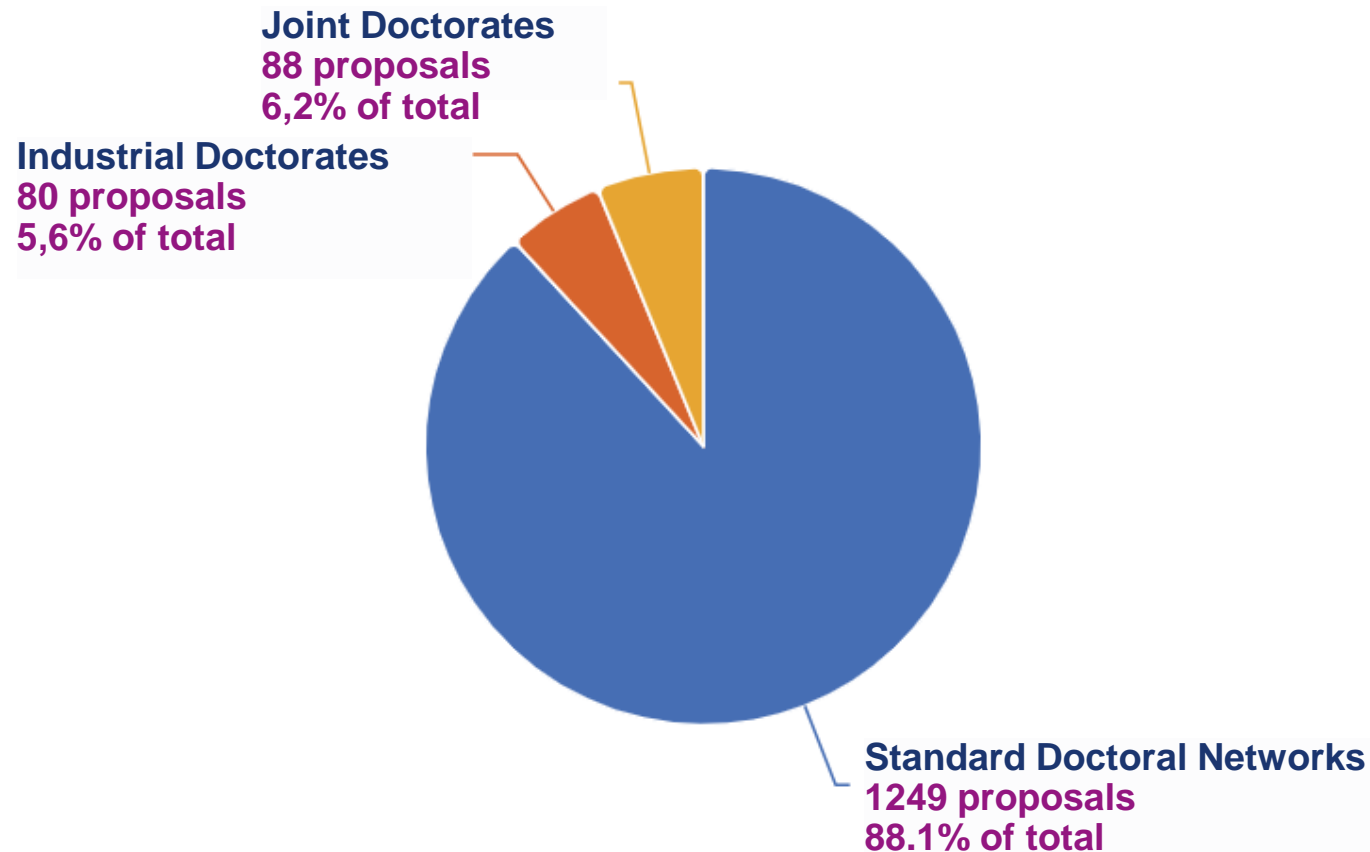


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Doctoral Network 2024 submission figures

Distribution of proposals by type of action



Total number of proposals: 1417

Source of statistics: [MSCA website](#)

Doctoral Network 2024 submission figures

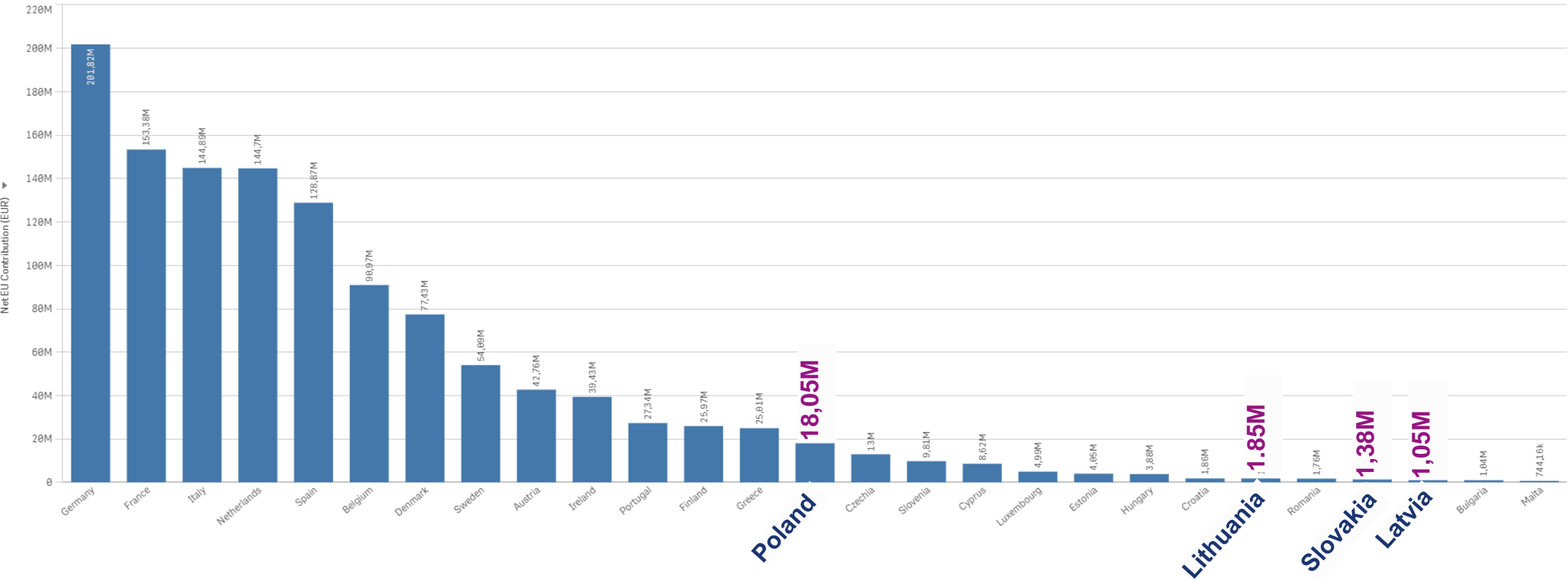
Submission of proposals by country of coordinator



Through this call, the European Union (EU) is expected to fund over **150 projects**, with an indicative budget of **€608.6 million**.

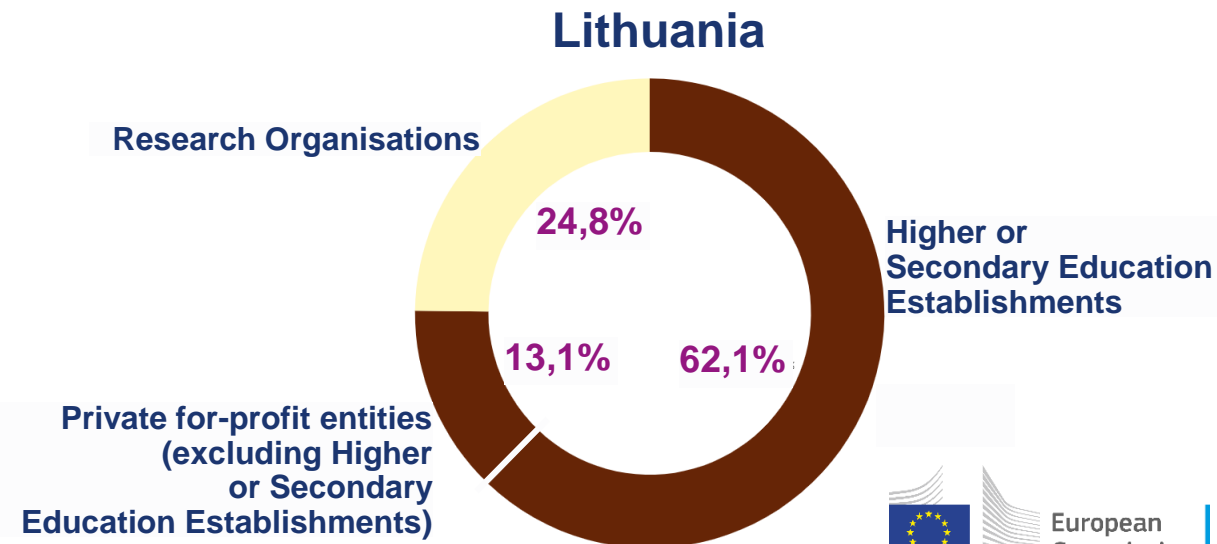
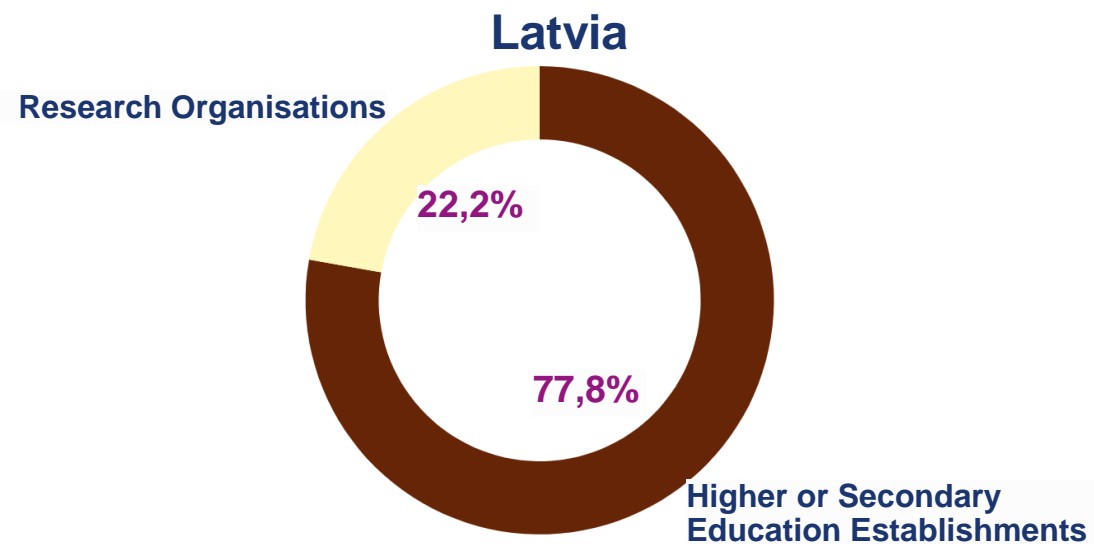
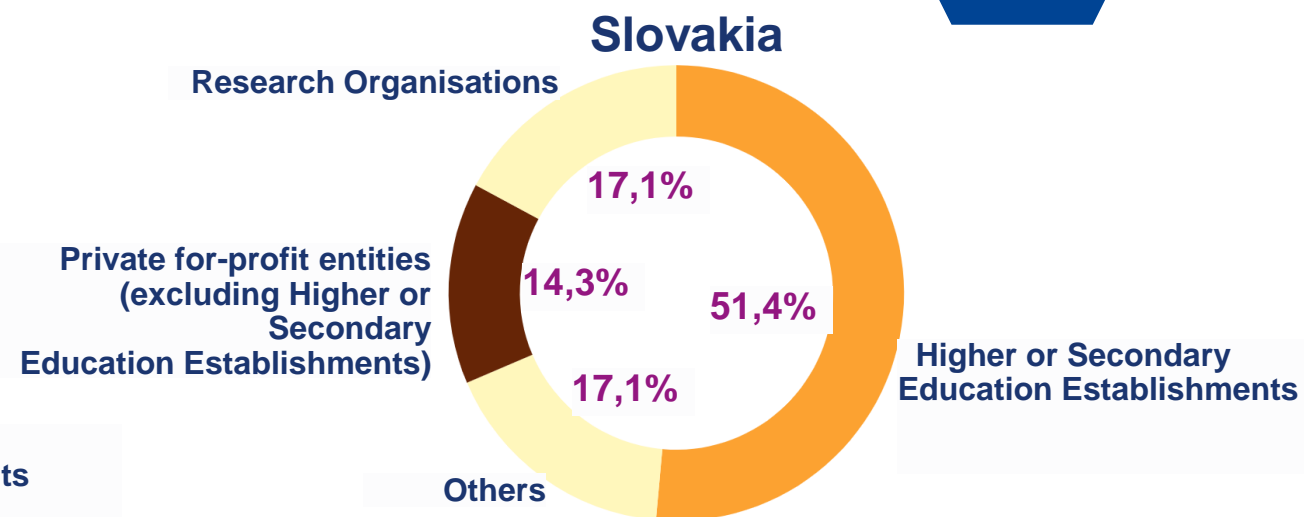
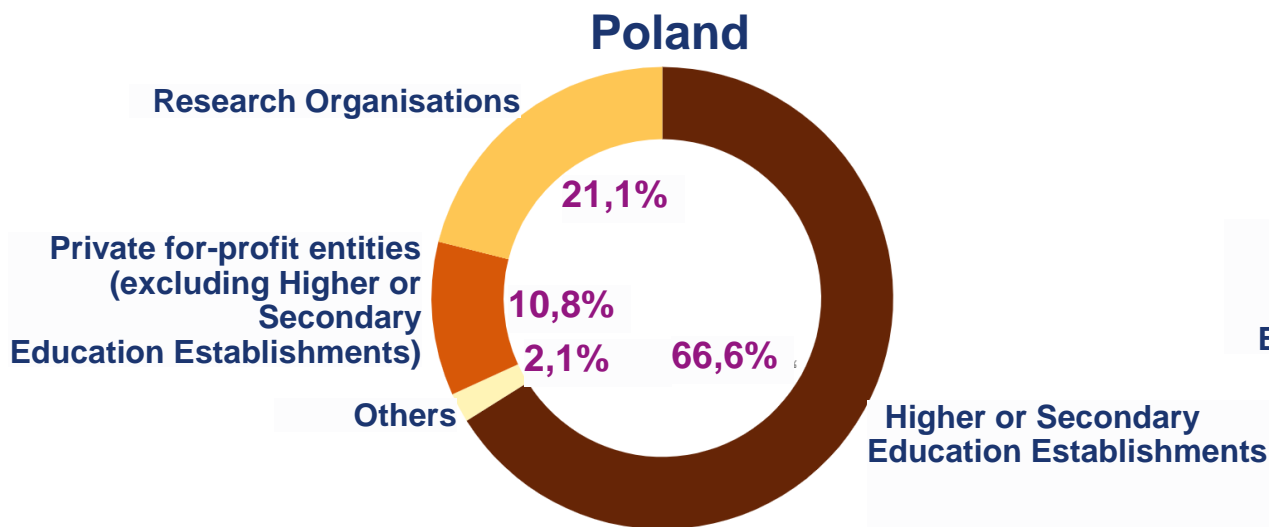
The European Research Executive Agency (REA) received proposals from coordinators based in **34 countries**.

Horizon Europe – DN contribution to Member States



Calls included 2021, 2022 and 2023
Source of statistics: [Horizon Dashboard](#)

Types of organisations – Based on the net EU Contribution





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Doctoral Networks – Resources



@MSCActions



@Marie.Curie.Actions

Useful links

Funding and Tenders opportunities (Work Programme, applications, documents, partner search)

MSCA Doctoral Networks 2025 Call documents
available in the F&T Portal as of **May 28th**

Horizon Europe MSCA Work Programme 2023-2025

MSCA website

European Research Executive Agency website
MSCA Guidelines on Supervision

Code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers


MCAA alumni platform

Do you have questions?


Ask advice to your MSCA / EU
National Contact Point

Ask your questions about EU
funding, validation of
participants, and others to the
Research Enquiry Service

Work as an EC expert


 European Commission

Funding & tender opportunities
Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA)

English 

Register Login


SEARCH FUNDING & TENDERS HOW TO PARTICIPATE PROJECTS & RESULTS **WORK AS AN EXPERT** SUPPORT

 Legal Entity and Bank Account validations tasks will experience issues in the Grant Management Services on Monday, 21.03.2022, between 20:00 and 21:30 CET.
The Identity, Bank Account, Contracts & Payments functionalities in the Experts Area of the F&T Portal will be unavailable on Monday, 21.03.2022, between 20:00 and 21:30 CET.

Need help?

Work as an expert

The European Union Institutions appoint external experts to assist in the evaluation of grant applications, projects and tenders, and to provide opinions and advice in specific cases.



Being an expert for the European Commission... Watch Later Share

In particular, experts assist in:

- **Evaluation** of proposals, prize applications and tenders
- **Monitoring** of actions, grant agreements, public procurement contracts

In addition, experts provide opinion and advise on:

- **Preparation, implementation and evaluation of EU programmes and design of policies.**

In order to select experts, the European Union Institutions publish regularly calls for expression of interest (see list below) detailing the selection criteria, the required expertise, the description of the tasks, their duration and the conditions of remuneration.

Interested? Please join the database of external experts!

[Register as expert](#)

As **new expert**, you will be first requested to create your EU login account and register your profile.

Registered experts can update the profile via the My Expert Area after [login](#).

News

24 Feb, 2022

Research Fund for Coal and Steel (RFCS) - Call for experts!

The Research Fund for Coal and Steel is looking for expert evaluators. A call for experts for RFCS has been published on the RFCS website. IMPORTANT: Interesse...


14 Oct, 2021

CINEA Innovation Fund – Call for experts

The European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) is looking for experienced technical and Life Cycle assessment (GHG) experts, as ...

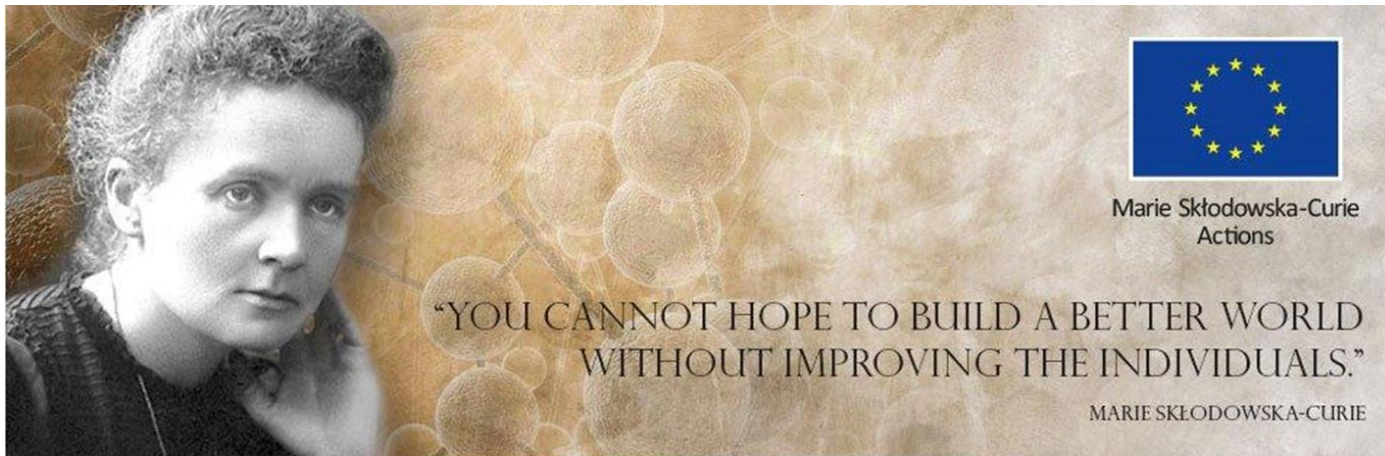
[All news >](#)

Quick Links

-  Standard briefing slides for experts (HE)
- [FAQ for Experts](#)
- [Lists of contracted experts](#)

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert>

Thank you



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