European Commission

THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

MSCA Doctoral Networks

Infoday Presentation

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17 April 2023

Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions

This presentation is based on the conditions and requirements of the MSCA DN 2023 call, as set out in the Horizon Europe MSCA Work Programme 2023.

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MSCA: A world reference for research and training

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 with industry and SMEs

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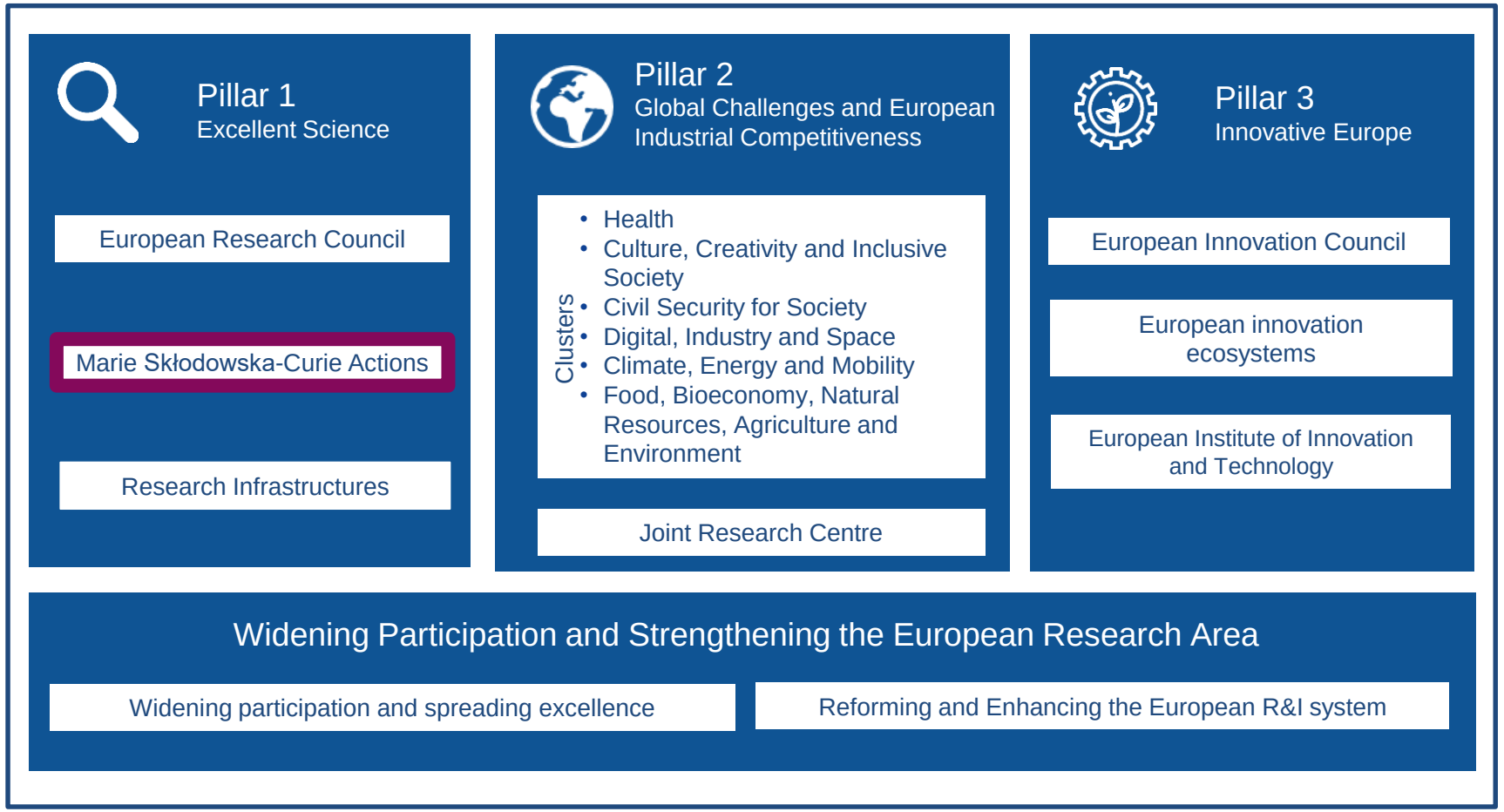
The MSCA in Horizon Europe



MSCA in HE: Total Budget of € 6.6 billion

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The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

1 Doctoral Networks

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

2022: 428 M€, DL 15/11/2022
2023: 435 M€, DL 28/11/2023

2 Postdoctoral Fellowships

Support to excellent postdoctoral researchers

2022: 257 M€, DL 14/09/2022
2023: 260 M€, DL 13/09/2023

3 Staff Exchanges

Support for research and innovation staff exchanges

2022: 77 M€, DL 08/03/2023
2023: 79 M€, DL 28/02/2024

4 COFUND

Co-funding doctoral and postdoctoral programmes

2022: 95 M€, DL 09/02/2023
2023: 97 M€, DL 08/02/2024

5 MSCA and Citizens

Public outreach events (Night)

2023: 15 M€, DL 25/10/2023

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What are Doctoral Networks ?

One consortium (Universities, research centres, industries, SMEs)…

…which proposes an overall coherent research project…

…and a number of interlinked individual PhD research projects…

…for PhD students that they will recruit in the future.

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MSCA DN Programme Expected Outcomes

- Benefits for both the **Doctoral Candidates** and **Participating Organisations**
- Train creative, entrepreneurial, innovative and resilient doctoral candidates
  - Face current and future challenges
  - Convert knowledge and ideas into products and services
  - Achieve sustainable economic and social benefit
- 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 academia
- 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**

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MSCA DN Programme Expected Impacts

- 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**

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What are Doctoral Networks?

Multi-beneficiaries Actions to set up **doctoral programmes** comprising:

- Doctoral Networks (standard): Training in academia and/or industry
- Industrial Doctorates: Training in academia and industry, Joint supervision
- Joint Doctorates: Joint collaborations leading to a joint/double/multiple doctoral degree, Joint selection and supervision; pre-agreement for joint degrees required

Doctoral Networks – Modes of implementation

3 modes

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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Doctoral Networks – 2023 Features

Size: Up to 540 person-months for all implementation modes
Duration:

- **Programme**: max. 48 months for Standard DN and DN-ID; **max 60 months for DN-JD**
- **Fellowship**: between 3 and 36 months for Standard DN and DN-ID; **max 48 months for DN-JD**
- **Secondments**: worldwide, up to 1/3 of the fellowship duration for Standard DN; **no limitation for DN-ID and DN-JD**
- **Industrial doctorates (DN – ID)**:
  - At least 50% in the non-academic sector (can be in the same country as the academic host organisation); non-academic sector as beneficiary or AP
  - Academic and non-academic organisations jointly supervise
- **Joint doctorates (DN – JD)**:
  - Enrolment in a joint/double or multiple PhD (delivered by entities located in at least 2 MS/AC)
  - Joint admission, selection, training, supervision, governance
  - Letters of pre-agreement to deliver joint/double/multi degrees (template)

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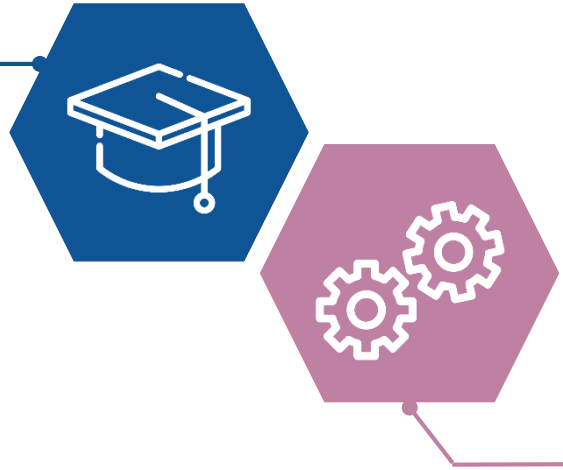
Doctoral Networks – Academic / non-academic sectors

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

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Doctoral Networks – Eligibility 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

- **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 40.0% of the EU contribution may be allocated to beneficiaries in the same country** or to a single international organisation.

- **Specific eligibility conditions for Industrial and Joint Doctorates**

- **!** Re-submission restrictions for proposals scoring below 80% in Call 2022

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Doctoral Networks – Eligible Participants

- **Who can apply?**
  - Any Legal Entity from anywhere in the world
  - But not all applicants are automatically eligible for funding

- **Consortia** of:
  - Universities, research institutions and research infrastructures
  - Businesses including SMEs
  - Other socio-economic actors

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

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	✓	✗

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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 participation is essential)**
  - **IO in a MS or AC are eligible for funding for Training and mobility actions and when announced in the call conditions**

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Doctoral Networks – Eligible Countries

EU Member State (MS): 27 countries/ overseas territories

Associated Country(AC): Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine
***** *Morocco, United Kingdom*

Note: Switzerland is **not** an associated country

Third Country (TC): any other country (n.b. Annex A list of countries that can receive funding)

*** Still ongoing –** for more detail, please consult the HE programme guide and the List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe

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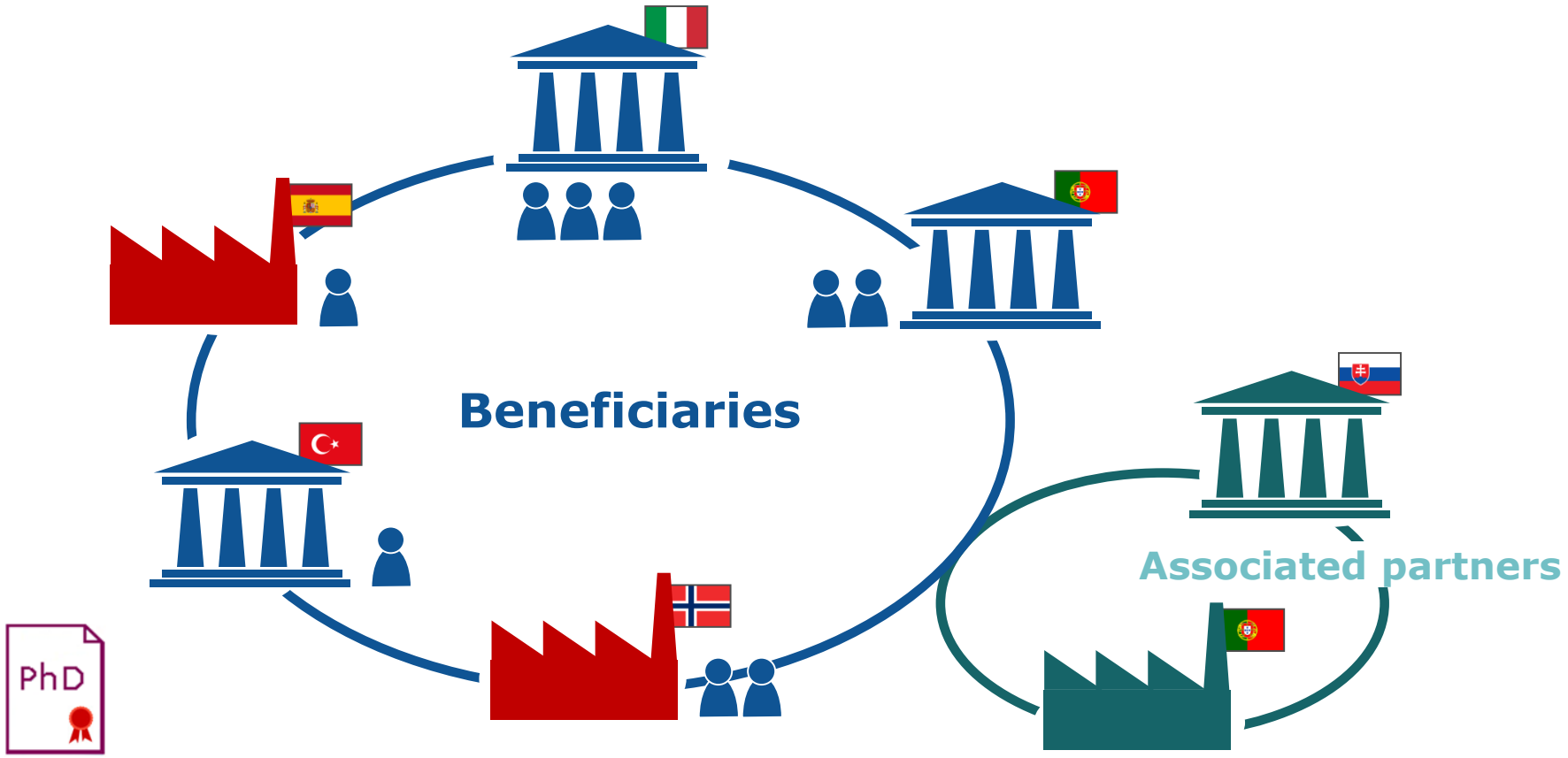
Doctoral Networks – Eligible Researchers

- 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 (at least 2 for Joint Doctorates)
- **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.

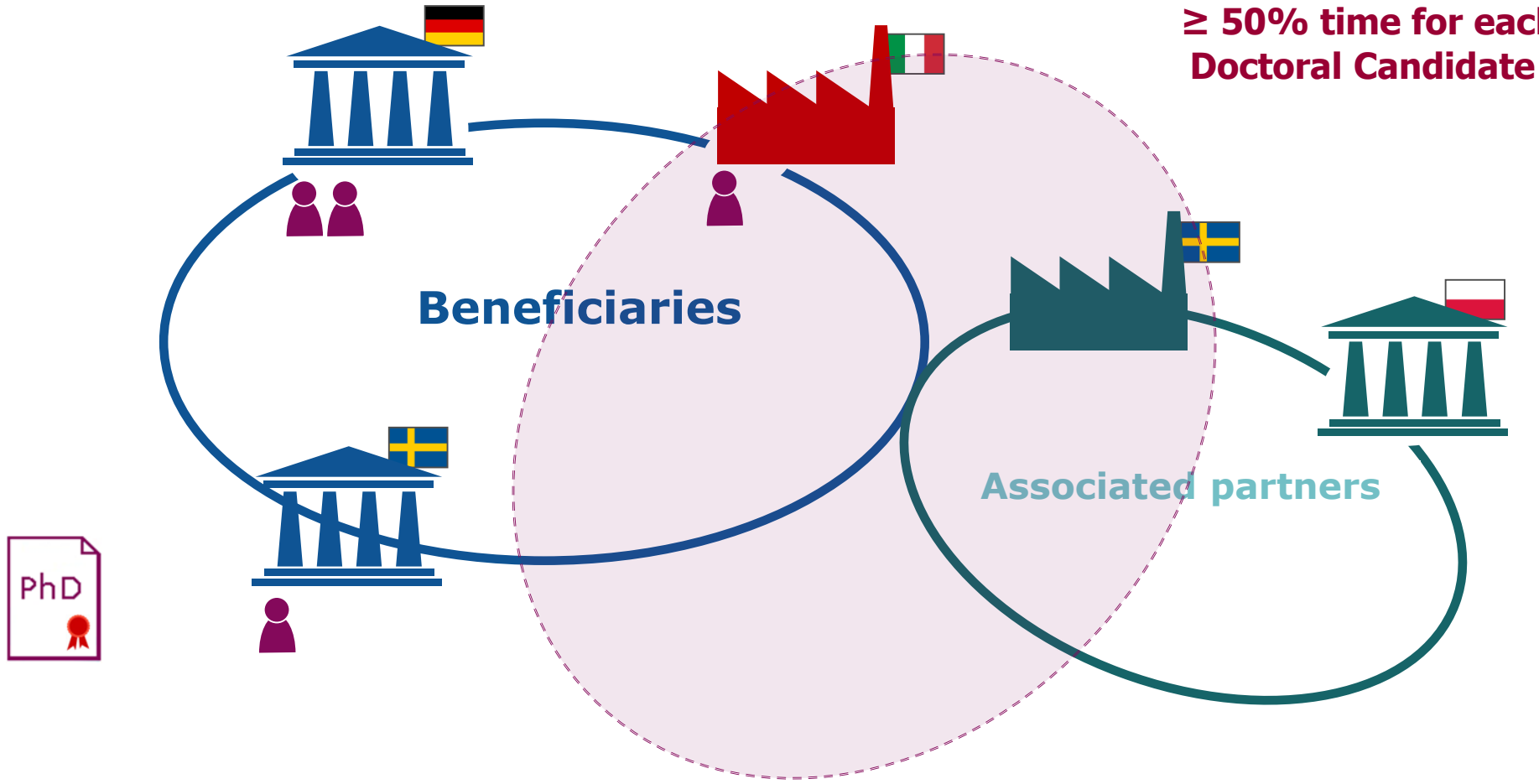
Doctoral Network – Example consortium



Industrial Doctorate – Example consortium

NON ACADEMIC SECTOR

≥ 50% time for each Doctoral Candidate



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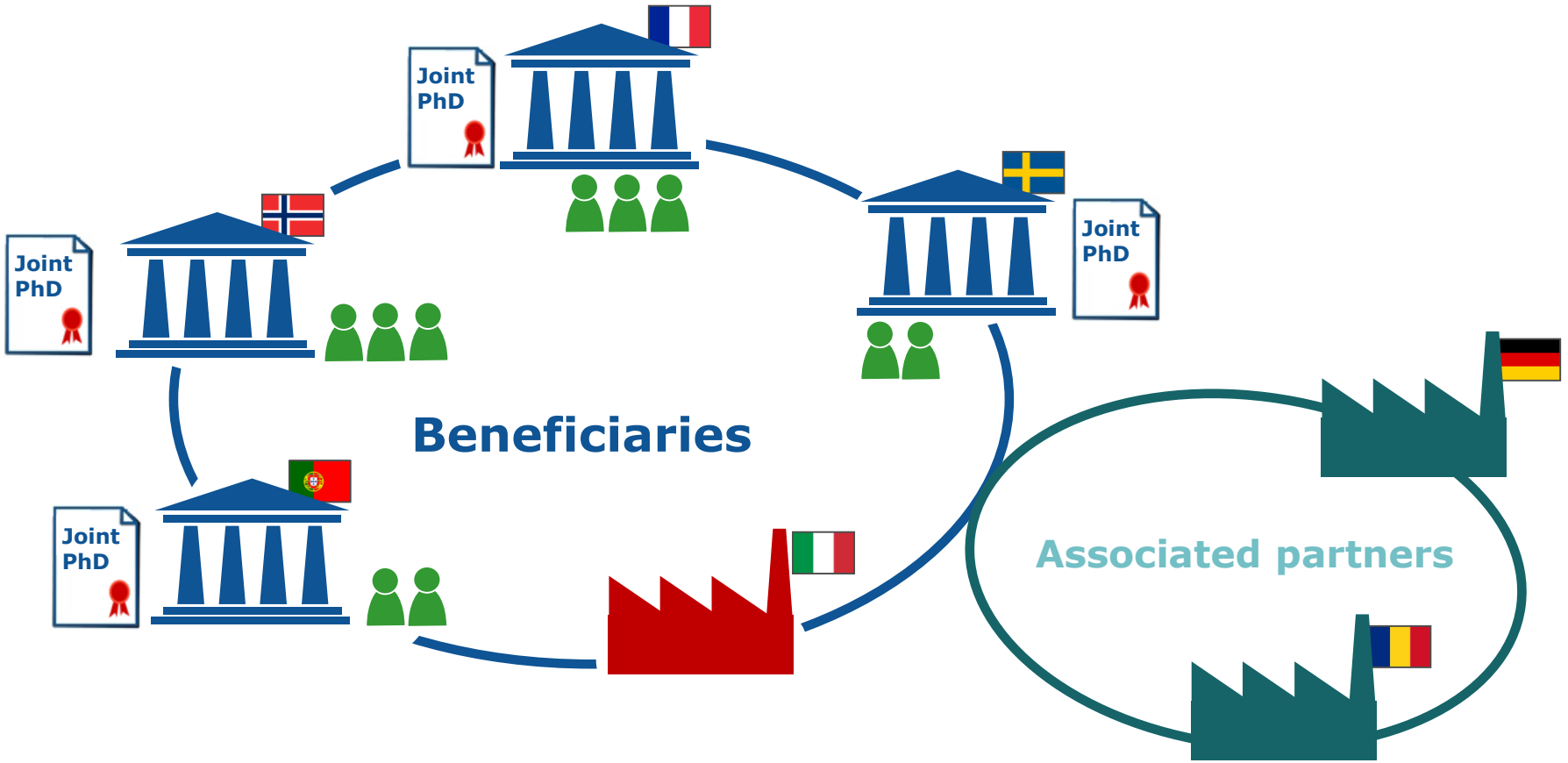
Joint Doctorate – Example consortium



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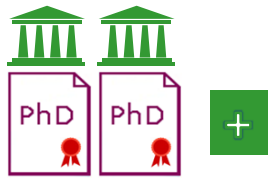
Joint Doctorate – Degrees

Joint degree: single diploma issued by at least 2 academic institutions located in 2 different countries and recognised officially



Double/multiple degree: 2 or more separate national diplomas issued by two or more higher education institutions located in different countries and recognised officially

Letters of pre-agreement to deliver joint/double doctoral degrees are mandatory in the proposal

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Doctoral Networks – Overview

		DN	DN-ID	DN-JD
BENEFICIARIES	**Minimum Number of beneficiaries**	3	3	3
	Minimum MS or HE AC	3	3	3
	Minimum MS (beneficiaries)	1	1	1
	Academic sector	No restrictions	No restrictions	Minimum 3 entitled to award doctoral degrees; at least 2 (beneficiaries/ associated partners/ associated partners linked to a beneficiary) conferring the degree established in MS/HE AC.
	Non-academic sector	No restrictions	No restrictions	No restrictions
	Max no. of person months	**540**	**540**	**540**
	Max 40.0% budget for 1 country/international organisation	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Beneficiary (or associated partner/associated partner linked to a beneficiary) awarding PhD		Mandatory (beneficiary or associated partner/ associated partner linked to a beneficiary)	Mandatory (beneficiary or associated partner/ associated partner linked to a beneficiary)	Mandatory for minimum 3 beneficiaries in MS/HE AC *
Joint award of PhD		Optional	Optional	Mandatory
Joint degree – letter of pre-agreement		N/A	N/A	Mandatory
Joint supervision for researchers		Encouraged	Mandatory (from the 2 sectors)	Mandatory
Researchers enrolment in the PhD		Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Secondments: international, inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary		≤ 1/3	*Min 50% stay in the non-academic sector***	No ceiling for secondment duration
Associated partner: Letter of Commitment (LoC)		**No Letters of Commitment**		
Ranking lists		8 (Scientific) panels		

* Letters of Pre-Agreement required

** No ceiling for the duration of the secondments

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Doctoral Networks – Funding mechanism

Simplified Approach

- **1 unit cost** = 1 person-month of each eligible researcher
- 100% Reimbursement rate for eligible beneficiaries
- Different cost categories
  - Researcher's cost
  - Institutional costs (research, training, networking + management)

Doctoral Networks – Funding

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 3400*	EUR 600	EUR 660	EUR 4000 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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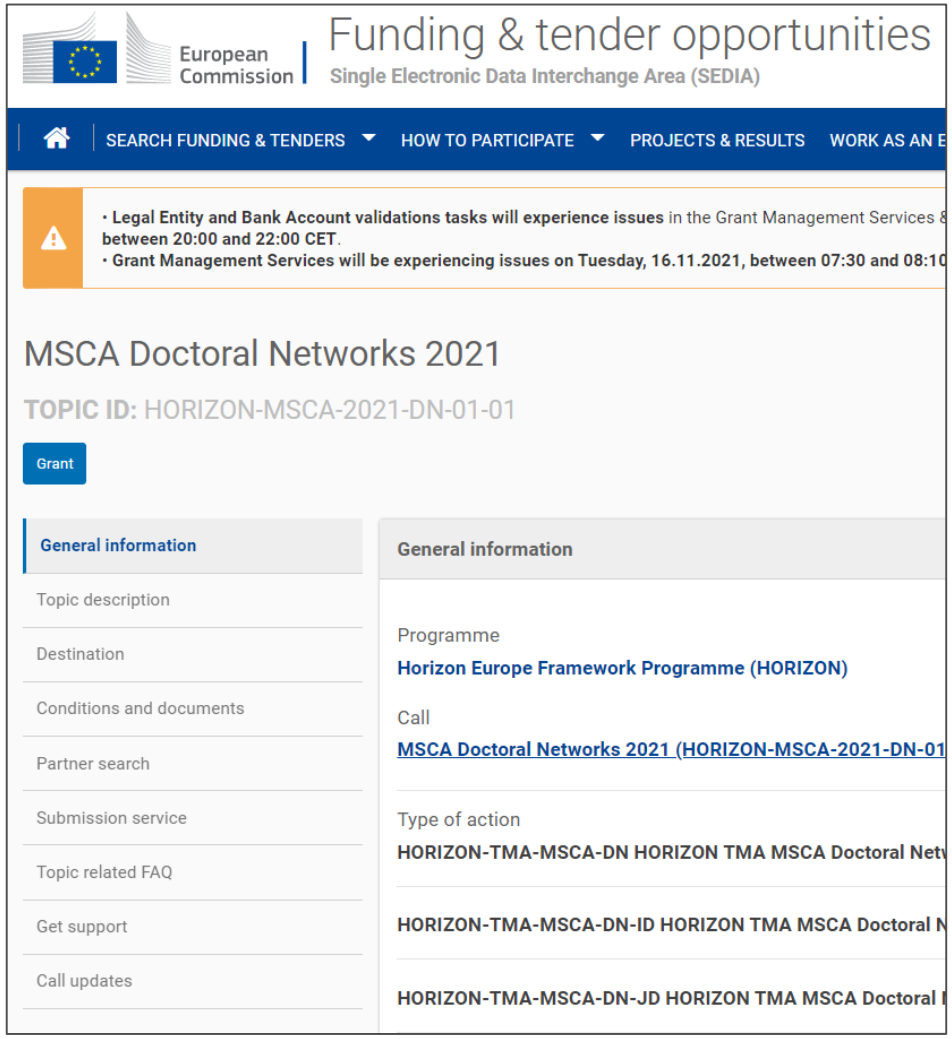
Doctoral Networks – Evaluation process

Evaluation is carried out by external experts under the responsibility of REA

Doctoral Networks – Award Criteria

Criteria	Excellence	Impact	Quality and efficiency of the 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?



Useful documents

- MSCA Work Programme
- Horizon Europe annexes
- Guide for Applicants
- Proposal templates
- Frequently Asked Questions

Part A (structured data)

Part B (description of action)

Part B1: 30 page
Part B2: no limit

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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

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Doctoral Networks – Resources

@MSCActions

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Useful links

Funding and Tenders opportunities (applications, documents, partner search): https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen

Horizon Europe MSCA Work Programme 2023-2024: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-2-msca-actions_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf

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

European Research Executive Agency website: https://rea.ec.europa.eu/index_en

MSCA in Horizon Europe Info Days: https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/events/upcoming-events/horizon-europe-info-days/marie-sklodowska-curie-actions_en

MSCA Guidelines on Supervision: https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/508311

Do you have questions?

Ask advice to your MSCA/EU National Contact Point

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp

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

https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/contact/research-enquiry-service_en

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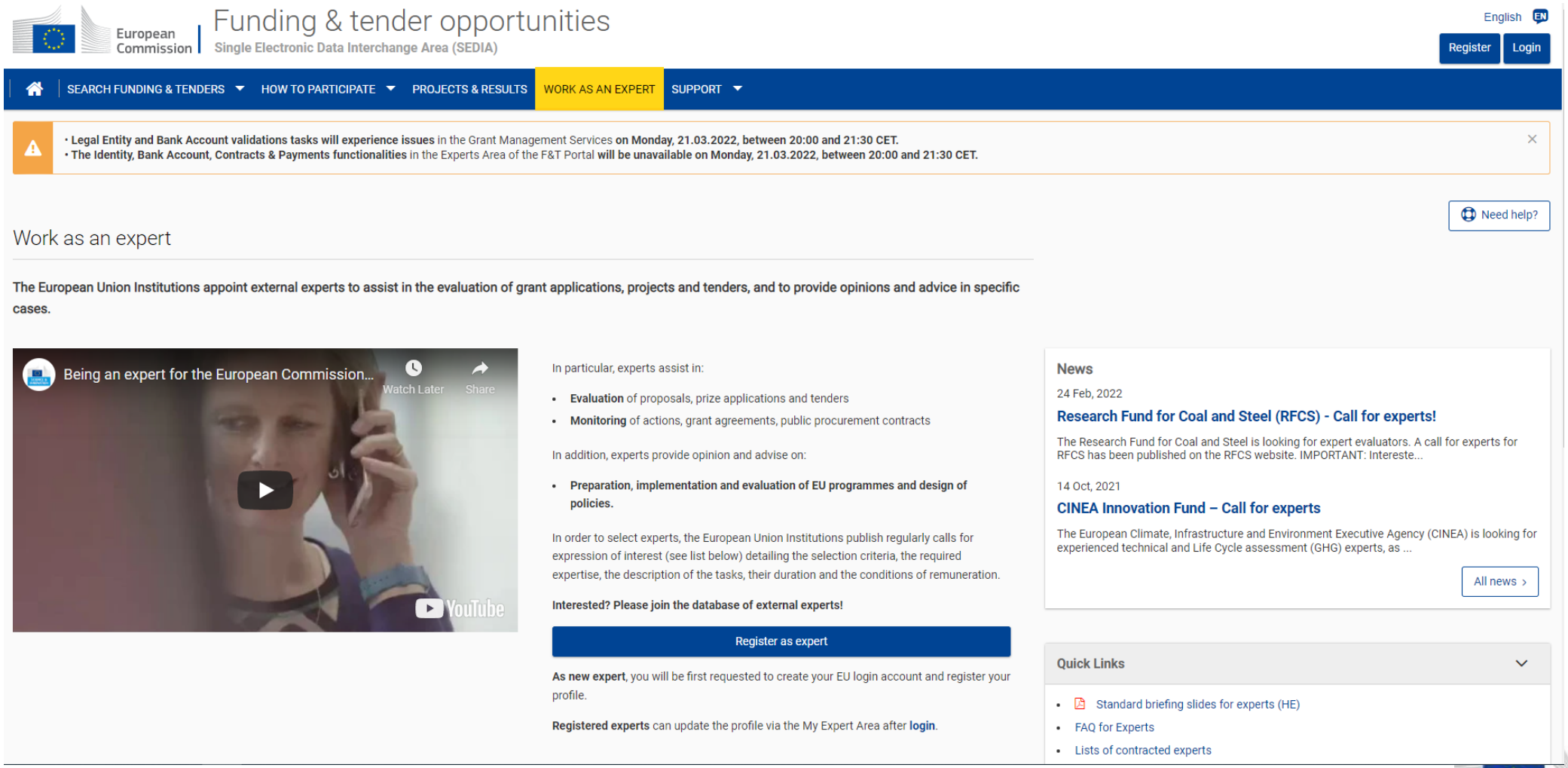
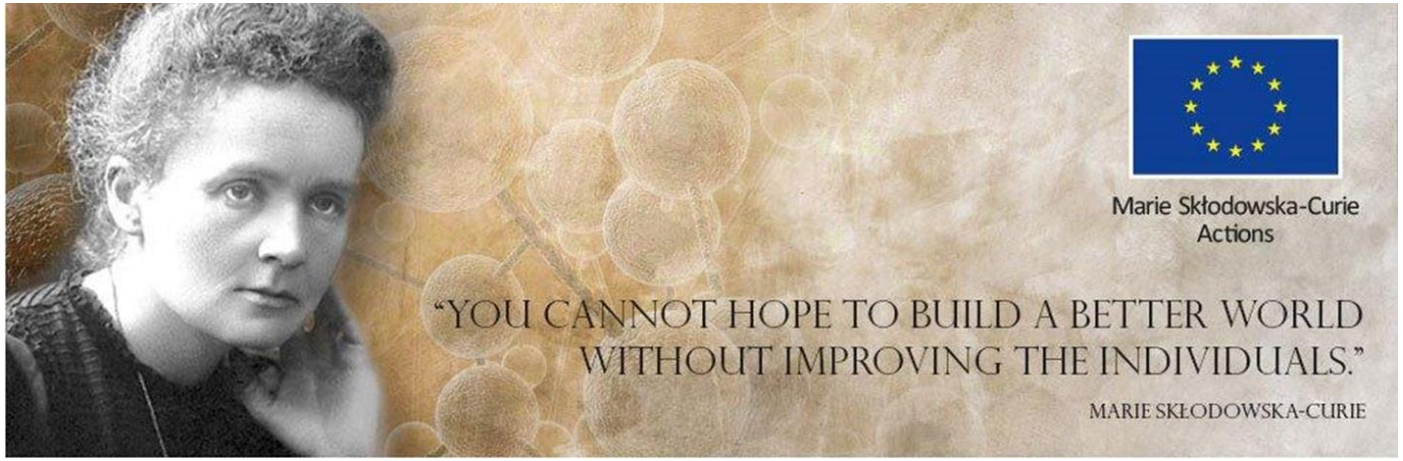
Work as an EC expert



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

Thank you



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