



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Innovative Training Networks (ITN)

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All questions and answers are also published on:
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/faq.html>



CONSORTIUM SET-UP

Q1: Can organisations from Third Countries and International Organisations participate in the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call?

A: The participation of organisations from Third Countries (TCs) and International Organisations (IOs) in the Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call is possible.

Organisations from any country may participate as Partner Organisations in an ITN project.

To participate as a beneficiary, TCs (i.e. a country that is not a Member State or a country associated to Horizon 2020) are divided into two groups:

1) TCs listed in the General Annex A of the relevant Work Programme:

Organisations from these countries are eligible to receive funding provided that the minimum eligibility requirements of the consortium have been met.

2) TCs *not* listed in the above mentioned Annex A of the relevant Work Programme and International Organisations (IO):

Funding to organisations from these countries and to IOs can be permitted in exceptional cases if at least one of the two following conditions is met:

- the participation is deemed essential for carrying out the action by the Commission or the relevant funding body on the grounds that participation by the applicant has clear benefits for the consortium, such as:
 - outstanding competence/expertise
 - access to research infrastructure
 - access to particular geographical environments
 - access to data

- such funding is provided for under a bilateral scientific and technological agreement or any other arrangement between the Union and the international organisation or, for entities established in third countries, the country in which the legal entity is established.¹

Applicants wishing to include organisations from TCs not listed in Annex A of the relevant Work Programme or IOs as beneficiaries in their consortium should focus on demonstrating that their participation is essential for carrying out the proposed project.

In this case the participation of TCs and IOs as beneficiaries will be based on the judgment as to whether the participation of the entity in the project offers unique benefits to the consortium. These benefits could include, for example, outstanding/unique competence and expertise, access to unique research infrastructures, access to particular geographical environments, etc.

¹ A list of such agreements is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/index.cfm?pg=countries>.



Q2: Can Partner Organisations in the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call be from the same country as the Coordinator?

A: Yes, Partner Organisations can be from any country, any discipline and any sector.

Q3: Is there a recommended number of Partner Organisations in a MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call?

A: No, there is not a recommended number of Partner Organisations in an ITN proposal. The number of partners will depend on each individual research training programme and on each Partner Organisation's added value to the programme. Each Partner Organisation should therefore demonstrate a real and active role in the project.

Q4: If the institution delivering the doctoral degree is not a beneficiary, should it be added as Partner Organisation in the consortium?

A: Yes, if the information is known at this stage, it is necessary to include the institution as Partner Organisation.

Q5: Does the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call allow for mono-site consortia?

A: No, mono-site consortia are not allowed for the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call under the Horizon 2020 rules. However, mono-site doctoral programmes can now be co-funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND action. Please refer to the relevant Work Programme.

Q6: What is meant by academic and non-academic sector in the context of the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call?

A: The definition is specific to the MSCA Work Programme.

"Academic Sector" means public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees, public or private non-profit research institutes whose primary mission is to pursue research, and international European interest organisations as they are defined in Article 2.1(12) of the Horizon2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No 1290/2013.

"Non-Academic Sector" means any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector and fulfilling the requirements of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No. 1290/2013. The non-academic sector may include for example industry organisations and business, government, civil society organisations such as non-profit or charitable organisations (NGOs, trusts, foundations, etc.), cultural institutions, museums, hospitals, international organisations (like UN or WHO), etc.



Q7: Is non-academic sector participation essential in an MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) proposal?

A: Yes, the participation of the non-academic sector is considered essential. As the ITN call aims to improve the employability of researchers through exposure to organisations in both the academic and non-academic sectors, an essential part of any ITN is the involvement of organisations from different sectors. For European Industrial Doctorates (EID), note that the participation of the non-academic sector as a beneficiary is an eligibility criterion. The degree of involvement of organisations from the non-academic sector will be assessed by the expert evaluators according to the evaluation criteria.

Q8: Is it permitted under the rules of the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call to propose a network comprising only research organisations and companies as beneficiaries?

A: European Training Networks (ETN) may be composed of only research organisations and companies. However, almost all Innovative Training Networks (ITN) have universities among the beneficiaries and/or Partner Organisations so that PhD degrees can be awarded by these institutions. For European Industrial Doctorates (EID) with 2 beneficiaries, it is possible to have as beneficiaries only research organisations and companies. However, an institution entitled to award a doctoral degree must be associated to the project as a Partner Organisation in order to award the doctoral degrees. For multi-site EIDs, it is expected that universities will participate as beneficiaries. For European Joint Doctorates (EJD), the above-mentioned set-up is not allowed. The participation of 3 beneficiaries which are academic institutions entitled to award doctoral degrees and located in 3 different Member States or Associated Countries is an eligibility criterion for the type of action. For more details please see the relevant Work Programme and Guide for Applicants.

Q9: Can universities which are not offering doctoral degree programmes (e.g. universities of applied sciences) still apply for the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call?

A: For European Training Networks (ETN), such universities may participate as beneficiaries, as long as they recruit, host and supervise the recruited fellows at their premises. In such a case, the fellow may be enrolled in a PhD programme at another academic beneficiary or Partner Organisation entitled to award doctoral degrees.

For European Joint Doctorates (EJD) and European Industrial Doctorates (EID), such universities may also participate. However for EJD they do not count as one of the academic beneficiaries required for the minimum eligibility rules as they are not entitled to award doctoral degrees.

For EID, should none of the academic beneficiaries be entitled to award a doctoral degree, a university entitled to award a doctoral degree must be at least associated to the project as a Partner Organisation.



PROPOSAL – PART A

Q10: What is the main difference between the MSCA European Training Networks (ETN), European Industrial Doctorates (EID), and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) types of action?

A: While European Training Networks (ETN) should be constructed as a joint research training programme where recruited fellows *may* be enrolled in various local doctoral programmes, European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) proposals should demonstrate a coherent doctoral programme in which all fellows participate. The doctoral programmes should contain common features as well as mode-specific features as described in the Work Programme, including individualised research projects. The evaluation criteria of EID, EJD and ETN will be applied according to the objectives of the type of action in question, as described in the Work Programme.

Q11: Can an organisation submit a proposal to each of the three MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) types of action?

A: Yes, however, applicants must demonstrate that the scientific and training programme of each proposal is unique and original in order to avoid a potential risk of double-funding. In addition, should an organisation receive funding for more than one project under the call, they should demonstrate that they have the capacity to participate in each project to the extent indicated in the proposal.

Q12: Are re-submissions of previous MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) proposals allowed?

A: Yes, each proposal shall be evaluated against the relevant Work Programme evaluation criteria. In the case of proposals that have been submitted in the past two years in response to a call for proposals in Horizon 2020, the previous Evaluation Summary Report will be disclosed to the evaluators at the consensus stage of the evaluation.

Please note that each evaluation is an independent exercise, and also depends on the level of competition amongst ITN submitted proposals. Over the years proposals are assessed by different evaluators who may express different judgements and opinions.

If you have submitted your proposal (or a very similar one) to the ITN Calls for Proposals MSCA-ITN-2016 or MSCA-ITN-2017, the evaluators will receive a copy of the previous Evaluation Summary Report. In case the evaluation markedly differs from the previous evaluation(s), the evaluators will be instructed to verify that their comments and scores for the current proposal are duly justified. There will be no comparison between proposals.

No reference to the outcome of previous evaluations of a similar proposal should be included in the text. Experts will be strictly instructed to disregard any such references.



Q13: Why is it necessary to select appropriate descriptors in the proposal Part A during submission of the proposal for a MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call?

A: The descriptors will help the REA to identify the most qualified and suitable experts to evaluate the proposal in question. To assist applicants in selecting the most relevant descriptors, a document providing a breakdown of each research area into a number of descriptors can be found at the end of the Guide for Applicants.

Q14: The project duration of an MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) project is usually 4 years. Are projects of a longer or shorter duration acceptable?

A: Project duration is limited to a maximum of 4 years. This gives the consortium sufficient time to recruit the fellows and to appoint them for the maximum 36-months period. Shorter durations of the grant agreement are possible but not recommended.

PROPOSAL – PART B

Q15: In the project proposal under MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) calls what should be included in table 1.1 "Work Package List"?

A: Table 1.1 of the project proposal must list all of the Work Packages covering all aspects of the project. Depending on the size of the network, the scientific content can be presented in more than one research Work Package. Another one should be dedicated to training. It is good practice to add separate Work Packages on management, exploitation and dissemination of results, as well as communication activities targeted to different audiences. The number of Work Packages must be reasonable and commensurate with their content.

Q16: In the project proposal under MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) should the proposal Section 1 (Excellence) include information about individual research projects or should those be indicated in Section 3?

A: The Early Stage Researcher (ESR) involvement should be indicated in table 1.1 (Section 1). Depending on your project set-up, the involvement of the researchers in a particular Work Package may be described in table 3.1a (Section 3). However a detailed description of the individual research projects must be provided in table 3.1d (Section 3). Please ensure consistency between tables 1.1 and 3.1d.

Q17: How should individual Early-Stage Researcher (ESR) projects be structured and described?

A: The individual projects should constitute a collaborative research programme with strong inter-sectoral and multi-disciplinary components.



Q18: How should the training programme be structured and described in a MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) project proposal?

A: The proposal should describe the training programme, including both network-wide and local trainings. Network-wide training (e.g. research specific or complementary skills training) should be innovative in content and methods, and contain multi-disciplinary aspects. Applicants should seek to ensure that the network-wide training is accepted at the local level with European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) recognition under the umbrella of accredited universities. In addition, the fellows may also follow training courses offered locally at the beneficiary (e.g. since they are enrolled in the local PhD programme). Please follow the Part B of the proposal template for training and proposal structure.

Q19: Should the list of deliverables distinguish between scientific and management deliverables in MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) project proposals?

A: Yes, deliverables should be divided into scientific deliverables and management, training, recruitment and dissemination deliverables. They should follow the structure of the Work Packages. Deliverables should be spread throughout the project lifetime to allow an adequate monitoring of the progress of the action. Note that the submission of these deliverables to the Research Executive Agency (REA) is a contractual obligation.

Q20: Must all Partner Organisations be involved in the supervisory board of a MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) project?

A: Yes, the supervisory board must be composed of representatives of all beneficiaries and Partner Organisations and may also include any other stakeholders of relevance to the training programme, including those from the non-academic sector.

The participation of external stakeholders (e.g. future employers) in the supervisory board is not compulsory. However, such an involvement of external stakeholders can be highly beneficial as they can bring added value to the supervision of the training programme.

It is also considered best practice to include a representative from among the recruited Early Stage Researchers (ESR).

Q21: What is meant by “Independent Research Premises” in the table under section 5 “Participating Organisations” of Part B of the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) proposal?

A: The principle is that each beneficiary must have dedicated premises – owned or rented – to host and supervise the research work of the fellows. Therefore, a newly established campus company/university spin-off that neither owns nor rents premises would not be considered to have independent research premises, nor would a "letterbox company" or a company operating from a residential address. Partner Organisations hosting secondments should demonstrate that they have independent dedicated premises as described above.

It must be clear from the proposal where the recruited researchers are going to be hosted and the facilities and infrastructure that are available at that location.



Q22: Is there a template for the letter of commitment for MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) proposals?

A: For European Joint Doctorates (EJD) a template is provided for the letter of commitment and must be followed by all academic applicants awarding the doctoral degree(s). These letters, which must also be included in Part B7 of the proposal, have to be printed on headed paper and signed by a legal representative of the organisation authorised to commit the institution to awarding the joint, double or multiple doctoral degree(s). The expert evaluators will be instructed to disregard the contribution towards the joint doctorate of any beneficiary / Partner Organisation for which no such evidence of commitment is submitted with the proposal.

For ETN and EID there is no template for the letter of commitment. All Partner Organisations must include a letter of (institutional) commitment in the proposal, signed by an authorised representative to demonstrate their real and active participation in the proposed network. The letters, which must be included in Part B of the proposal, have to be printed on headed paper and signed in order to demonstrate the credibility of the organisation's commitment to the ITN. The expert evaluators will be instructed to disregard the contribution of any Partner Organisation for which no such evidence of commitment is submitted with the proposal. Please note however that the content of these letters is not assessed by the expert evaluators.

Q23: How can the concept of 'Open Science' be addressed in a MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) proposal / project?

A: Open Science describes the on-going evolution in the modus operandi of doing research and organising science. These changes in the dynamics of science and research are enabled by digital technologies and driven by the globalisation of the scientific community. They have an impact on the way research is produced, accessed and utilised. Innovative Training Networks (ITN) projects could, for example, offer training on the use of Open Access, and seek to ensure that the results, data and publications produced by the project are available in Open Access repositories. ITN projects should also ensure that procedures are in place to promote and manage the issue of research integrity within the project consortium. Training on research integrity and ethics should also be provided.

Open Data: beneficiaries will engage in research data sharing by default, as stipulated under Article 29.3 of the Horizon 2020 Model Grant Agreement (including the creation of a Data Management Plan). Participants may however opt out of these arrangements, both before and after the signature of the Grant Agreement in duly justified cases, see General Annexes to the Work Programme 2018-2020. Note that information related to Open Research Data provided in the proposal will not be subject to evaluation. In other words, proposals will not be evaluated negatively because they opt-out of the data sharing.

Further information on the Data Management Plan can be found in the documents section of the Participant Portal.



Q24: Where should a table of contents in Part B of the proposal for MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) be included?

A: A table of contents should be included in Document 1 of Part B of the proposal. It should not be longer than one page in length. Section 1 of Part B must start on page 5, and sections 1 to 3 must not exceed 30 pages in length. The expert evaluators will be strictly instructed to disregard any content above these pages limits. For more information, consult the relevant ITN Guide for Applicants..

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Q25: Will the evaluation of the MSCA European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) differ from that for European Training Networks (ETN) types of action?

A: All European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) proposals will be evaluated by experts in the scientific field(s) of the proposal like in European Training Networks (ETN). In all cases, the evaluation criteria will be used by the experts according to the implementation mode as indicated in the Work Programme. EID and EJD proposals will be ranked in two separate panels, as there is a specific budget allocation for these two implementation types of action in the Work Programme. Therefore, EID proposals will only compete against each other and not against ETN or EJD proposals. The same principle applies to EJD proposals. ETN proposals are ranked according to the scientific panel.

Q26: What is meant by operational capacity assessment during the evaluation of MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) proposals?

A: Operational capacity assessment is carried out during the evaluation. The experts will assess whether each participant has the operational capacity (basic operational resources and capacity, such as number and qualifications of staff and the facilities and equipment available on-site) to carry out the tasks allocated to them, based on what is presented in the proposal. Information contained in the table 'Data for non-academic beneficiaries' and section 5 in the proposal part B ('Participating Organisations') will be assessed in this context. The applicants are advised to fill in this data completely and accurately in order to ensure a proper assessment. If the experts determine that a particular entity does not have sufficient operational capacity to implement their role in the project, the proposal will be evaluated excluding the participation of that entity. Additional checks may be performed by REA prior to the signature of the Grant Agreement.



BUDGET

Q27: Are applicants required to indicate the amount of the estimated EU contribution in the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) proposal?

A: No, the EU contribution will be automatically calculated from the recruitment information provided in Part A of the proposal. Numbers and information listed in part A should be the same as those reported in Part B of the proposal. In case of discrepancy, values from the Part A will be deemed to prevail.

Q28: What happens if more researcher-months are requested than the maximum indicated in the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) 'Guide for Applicants'?

A: For MSCA ITN the 540 person months is the upper limit which may not be exceeded, except for EID projects with 2 beneficiaries where 180 person months is the limit. The applicants will not be able to submit their proposal, should they request more than these limits in part A of the proposal. In cases where Partner Organisations propose to fund their own participation in the action, or beneficiaries propose to fund additional person-months (over the 540 person-months limit) from another budget source, these person-months should not be requested in Part A of the proposal, but instead be indicated clearly in Part B of the proposal. A clear explanation of this set-up and of the use of own resources should therefore be provided in Part B.

Q29: How is the 40% rule calculated in MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) proposals?

A: All Innovative Training Networks (ITN) proposals (except for European Industrial Doctorates (EID) with only two beneficiaries) should take into account that no more than 40.0% of the total EU financial contribution may be allocated to beneficiaries in the same country. The EU financial contribution allocated to International organisations or international European interest organisations is not counted as part of any country. In this case the EU financial contribution allocated to each individual International organisation or international European interest organisation may not exceed 40.0% of the total EU financial contribution. Proposals not complying with this condition will be considered ineligible. Note that for EIDs with more than 2 beneficiaries, the institutions must be based in at least two different MS or AC countries, in order for the 40% rule to be respected.

Q30: How will the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call budget be distributed?

A: The Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call budget distribution is indicated in the relevant Work Programme. European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) proposals will be ranked in two separate lists since there is a specific budget allocation indicated in the Work Programme. For European Training Networks (ETN), the



proposals are ranked under eight major panels (areas of research). The budget for ETN is allocated to each of these panels in proportion to the number of eligible proposals submitted to the panel.

Q31: Is the EU contribution calculated the same way for MSCA European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) compared to European Training Networks (ETN) type of actions?

A: Yes, all researcher unit costs (monthly living allowance, mobility allowance, family allowance) and institutional unit costs (research, training and networking costs, management and indirect costs) are calculated in the same way for each of the three types of Innovative Training Networks (ITN) action.

Q32: Can Partner Organisations in MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) be reimbursed for the costs of training and/or hosting of seconded researchers?

A: Yes, costs incurred by Partner Organisations can be claimed by a beneficiary from the EU contribution available under the cost category: institutional unit cost. The beneficiary can then reimburse the Partner Organisation.

Q33: Are the costs related to face-to-face meetings, joint workshops between doctoral candidates and their supervisors (i.e. travel costs) eligible under MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) projects?

A: Yes, these costs can be covered by the institutional unit cost 'Research, Training and Network Costs'. For more details, please see the relevant 'Guide for Applicants'.

Q34: How are Management and indirect costs distributed between the beneficiaries in a MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) project?

A: The 'Management and indirect costs' are calculated based on the eligible units declared by each beneficiary. The beneficiaries may agree to redistribute these amounts among them according to their needs. As this is the internal decision of the network, no information or request has to be submitted to the Research Executive Agency (REA). It is common practice, however, that the coordinator receives a larger share of management and indirect budget in order to cover its higher management expenses. It is highly advisable that the proposed beneficiaries address the distribution of these costs before submitting their proposal and subsequently address this issue in the Consortium Agreement.

Q35: What is the role of invited visiting researchers mentioned in section 4.1 of the 'Guide for Applicants'? How can their related costs be reimbursed in a MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) project?

A: Visiting researchers, who are outstanding researchers in their field, typically may provide specific training to the researchers, contribute to summer schools, share their experience, etc.



The reimbursement of their costs may be covered under the institutional 'Research Training and Networking' cost category.

RECRUITMENT

Q36: Can Experienced Researchers be recruited in MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN)?

A: No, only Early Stage Researchers are eligible to participate in all Innovative Training Networks types of action.

Q37: Can an organisation participate in the consortium without recruiting a fellow in a MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) project?

A: In the European Training Networks (ETN), all beneficiaries in the consortium must recruit at least one fellow. In the European Industrial Doctorates (EIDs) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) beneficiaries may participate without recruiting any fellow. Additional information is available in the relevant 'Guide for Applicants'.
For the three types of Innovative Training Networks (ITN) action, Partner Organisations are not allowed to recruit fellows.

Q38: Is it possible in a MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) action that a third party hires the fellows on behalf of the beneficiary?

A: In H2020 MCSA there are no third parties to the grant agreement. It must be the beneficiary that gives the employment contract to the researchers and there are no exceptions to this rule. The beneficiary must recruit, host at its premises, and provide training to the researchers.

Where necessary, entities with a capital or legal link to the beneficiaries (and where this capital or legal link is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, e.g. joint research units, foundations, university hospitals and subsidiaries) may implement the tasks of hosting and training of researchers as described in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement. The involvement of such entities must be clearly described and justified in the proposal and will be assessed as part of the evaluation. Note, however, that only beneficiaries can recruit researchers and the recruiting beneficiary remains fully responsible for the correct implementation of the action and for ensuring the eligibility of the recruited fellow.



Q39: Must the beneficiaries provide full-time contracts to the researchers working on MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) projects?

A: As a rule, the researcher must be recruited under a full-time employment contract. Part-time employment must be agreed in advance by the Research Executive Agency (REA) and may be accepted:

- subject to prior approval by the Agency
- on personal or family grounds only, and
- not for professional reasons.

Q40: Is it mandatory to appoint fellows for the maximum 36-month period under the MSCA European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and the European Joint Doctorates (EJD) types of action?

A: Although not mandatory, these types of action are designed to fund doctoral research programmes and therefore Early-Stage Researchers are expected to be appointed for the maximum 36-month period. Shorter appointments (the minimum duration is 3 months) must be carefully explained and justified, and will be assessed by the expert evaluators during the evaluation procedure.

Q41: If MSCA European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) are doctoral programmes, why can Early-Stage Researchers only be appointed for a maximum of 36 months when many will take longer to complete their PhDs?

A: In those countries where the duration of PhD study is formally 4 years, additional funding from other sources should be secured by the participant in order to fund the 4th year of doctoral studies.

Q42: Under MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN), what is the definition of the date of recruitment and how does the mobility rule apply to it?

A: The term ‘Date of recruitment’ normally means the first day of employment of the researcher for the purposes of the action (i.e. the starting date indicated in the employment contract/equivalent direct contract). The Research Executive Agency (REA) may, however, exceptionally accept a different date, if it is linked to the recruitment and is justified (e.g. by differences in the employment procedure in the country of recruitment).

It should be kept in mind that it is the beneficiary which bears the final responsibility for verifying the eligibility rules and ensuring that sufficient evidence of the applicant's eligibility is maintained for a potential check or audit.

Q43: Under MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN), how is the family status taken into account during the recruitment and is it possible to modify it in the course of the project (e.g. if a researcher has a child)?

A: Family is defined as persons linked to the researcher by (i) marriage, or (ii) a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country or region



where this relationship was formalised; or (iii) dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher. This means children for which the researcher is under a legal obligation under national law to support them.

The family status of the individual ESR is determined at the time of their first recruitment in the project and does not change during the lifetime of the project.

Q44: Under MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN), is it compulsory for the ESRs enrolled in a PhD in an EID and EJD to defend their thesis within 3 years?

A: No, in EID and EJD the researchers must be enrolled in the doctoral programme. In case of EJD it shall be a joint doctoral programme leading to the award of joint, double or multiple doctoral degrees. However, in cases when a doctoral degree is awarded after 3 years or even after the end of the project the Research Executive Agency (REA) may check if the legal commitment to provide the joint, double or multiple degrees was fulfilled.

SECONDMENTS

Q45: In MSCA ITN what is the definition of secondment?

A: Secondment means a period spent by a fellow at a beneficiary's or a Partner Organisation's premises other than those of the beneficiary which has recruited him/her under the action. The premises of the beneficiaries / Partner Organisations must be independent from each other and therefore the secondment must involve physical mobility of the fellow. During their secondment, researchers receive supervision and training at the premises of the receiving beneficiary or Partner Organisation. More information is available in the ITN Guide for Applicants (section 4.2).

Q46: Are secondments important under the MSCA European Training Networks (ETN) type of action?

A: Yes, secondments of the researcher to other beneficiaries and Partner Organisations are encouraged, but should be relevant, feasible and beneficial for the researchers and in line with the project objectives. Secondments can contribute to the inter-sectoral experience and may also contribute to the multi/inter-disciplinary experience of the researchers. They will be assessed by the expert evaluators under the criterion "excellence". Secondments can only be to other beneficiaries or Partner Organisations and for ETN may not exceed 30% of the fellowship's duration. Research training performed at entities with a capital or legal link to the beneficiary is not considered as a secondment. During the project implementation, any changes to the secondment plan should be notified and approved by the REA.



Q47: In MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN), who covers the costs for secondments?

A: . Secondments of six months or less which require mobility from the place of residence must be financed using the Research, Training and Networking costs in order to prevent an unreasonable financial burden for the early-stage researchers. This includes at least the travel and accommodation costs.

Q48: In MSCA ITN may fellows be seconded to institutions that are not beneficiaries or Partner Organisations of the action?

A: No, fellows may only be seconded to the premises of beneficiaries and/or Partner Organisations of the action.

Q49: In MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN), is it possible to arrange secondments to Partner Organisations in the same country where the PhD is hosted?

A: Yes, for ETN and EJD projects, secondments within the same country are permitted, although international secondments are strongly encouraged in the Innovative Training Networks (ITN) calls. For EID projects, however, note that all inter-sectoral secondments (i.e. between the academic and non-academic sectors) between beneficiaries must be international (i.e. between beneficiaries located in different countries), and that secondment duration to partner organisations is limited to 30% of the fellowship duration.

EUROPEAN JOINT DOCTORATES (EJD) / EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL DOCTORATES (EID)

Q50: Will it be checked whether the doctoral degree has actually been awarded in MSCA European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) types of action?

A: Fellows recruited under European Industrial Doctorates (EID) and European Joint Doctorates (EJD) types of action must be enrolled in the doctoral programme and are expected to complete their studies (and under the rules of the EJD type of action must receive the joint, double or multiple doctoral degrees). For EJDs, a formal letter of commitment, following the template provided, to award joint/double/multiple doctoral degrees is required in the proposal. Since the doctoral degree may be awarded after the EID or EJD project has finished, it may not be feasible in all cases to check during the project lifetime as to whether the final degree was actually awarded. However, such checks may take place after the conclusion of the project.



Q51: Is it necessary that the joint doctoral degree is accepted in all countries involved in a MSCA European Joint Doctorates (EJD) project?

A: No, the joint doctoral degrees awarded under the European Joint Doctorates (EJD) type of action shall be recognised by the countries awarding the joint/double/multiple degree.

Q52: Under the MSCA European Joint Doctorates (EJD) type of action, is there a recommended duration that each fellow must spend in each host institution?

A: No, the Work Programme does not specify how much time the fellows must be hosted at each institution under the European Joint Doctorates (EJD) type of action. The hosting arrangements for each fellow have to be described in the proposal.

In EJDs the creation of a joint governance structure with joint admission, selection, supervision, monitoring and assessment is mandatory. One of the evaluation criteria is the quality of the joint supervision of the fellow and it is therefore expected that the institutions providing the joint degree have an active role in the supervision, monitoring, and training of the fellows for a meaningful period of time.

Q53: In MSCA European Joint Doctorates (EJD) do all the fellows have to be enrolled in a doctoral programme that leads to a joint/double/multiple doctoral degree?

A: Yes, all the fellows in the action must be enrolled in a doctoral programme that results in a joint/double/multiple doctoral degree awarded by institutions located in at least 2 different countries.

EJD result in joint, double or multiple doctoral degrees awarded by institutions from at least two different countries, primarily within Europe. At least two-thirds of the supported early-stage researchers within an EJD must be enrolled in a joint, double or multiple degree within Europe, i.e. between two or more beneficiaries/Partner Organisations established in an MS or AC. The remaining supported researchers must also be enrolled in a programme that results in a degree awarded by at least one European participating organisation (MS/AC). Applicants must indicate at the proposal level from which institutions a researcher is supposed to receive the degree(s).

Q54: In MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN), what are the main changes for European Industrial Doctorates (EID) mode between the 2016-2017 and the 2018-2020 Work Programmes?

A: The 2016-2017 Work Programme states the following: “For ITN EID, researchers must spend at least 50% of their time in the non-academic sector. **This** inter-sectoral mobility has to be between **participating organisations** located in different countries.”

The 2018-2020 Work Programme states the following: "For ITN EID, researchers must spend at least 50% of their time in the non-academic sector. **Any** inter-sectoral mobility between academic and non-academic **beneficiaries** must be international (i.e. between beneficiaries



established in different countries). The total **secondment duration to partner organisations** (irrespective of the sector) is limited to a **maximum of 30%** of the fellowship duration."

The main changes concern the international aspects of the inter-sectoral secondments in EID.

The previous rule was stricter from the implementation point of view and caused many interpretation issues, especially where two academic entities were involved. Therefore this rule has been updated to introduce more flexibility to the scheme. The international requirements for inter-sectoral mobility are now limited to beneficiaries and not to all participating organisations. Linked to this change, the total secondment duration to partner organisations has been limited to 30% of the fellowship duration, in order to maintain sufficient international dimension and enough involvement of the beneficiaries within the project.

Example 1: an ESR could spend 50% of their time at a PL university (where he/she is employed), 20% of their time at a PL SME partner organisation and then 30% of their time at a non-academic beneficiary in Norway, thus meeting both the non-academic sector, international requirements and 30% limit rule. This set-up is eligible.

Example 2: an ESR could spend 30% of their time at a UK university (beneficiary 1) (where he/she is employed), 30% of their time at a UK SME partner organisation and then 20% of their time at a non-academic beneficiary in Norway (beneficiary 2), as well as 20% at another beneficiary in the UK (beneficiary 3).

Is this set-up eligible?

- ✓ The 30% secondment limit to partner organisations is respected
- ✓ The non-academic sector requirement is fulfilled (minimum 50%).
- ✓ However, in order to respect the international requirement of inter-sectoral mobility between beneficiaries, the other beneficiary in the UK (beneficiary 3) must be academic.

Q55: In a two-partner MSCA European Industrial Doctorates (EID) can the academic beneficiary, not awarding doctoral degrees, be a research institution?

A: Yes. If the academic beneficiary is not entitled to award a doctoral degree, a university entitled to award a doctoral degree must be associated to the project as a Partner Organisation. The addition of the Partner Organisation becomes an eligibility criterion. However, the obligation of the beneficiary to recruit, host, and train the researcher remains unchanged. Since the Early Stage Researchers' (ESR) enrolment in a doctoral programme is a requirement for European Industrial Doctorates (EID), the proposal will have to clearly describe the role of each participant in the programme.



Q56: In MSCA European Industrial Doctorates (EID) is it possible that only one Beneficiary (academic or non-academic sector) recruits all Early Stage Researchers throughout the whole duration of the project?

A: Yes, this is possible only in a 2-beneficiary EID. Please note that in a multi-beneficiary EID (3 or more beneficiaries) a maximum of 40.0% of the total EU financial contribution may be allocated for the benefit of organisations within one country. Therefore, recruitments (and related budget) must be planned accordingly. The arrangements in the consortium must be made keeping in mind the obligation of hosting and training the ESRs for at least 50% of their time in the non-academic sector and the enrolment of the fellows in the doctoral programme.

Q57: The Work Programme states that for EID “the consortium must be composed of at least two independent beneficiaries located in two different MS/AC”. Would it be possible to create an EID consortium of more than two beneficiaries, involving only two countries?

A: No, since the Work Programme also states that not more than 40.0% of the requested EU contribution may be allocated to beneficiaries in the same country. This rule applies to all ITN except to an EID with only two beneficiaries. As a consequence, EID proposals involving more than two beneficiaries must be implemented in at least three countries (MS or AC).