



#HorizonEU

# THE EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

**MSCA Doctoral Networks**  
NCPs' infodays – Spain

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MSCA Doctoral Networks, REA

September 12<sup>th</sup> 2025

Research and  
Innovation

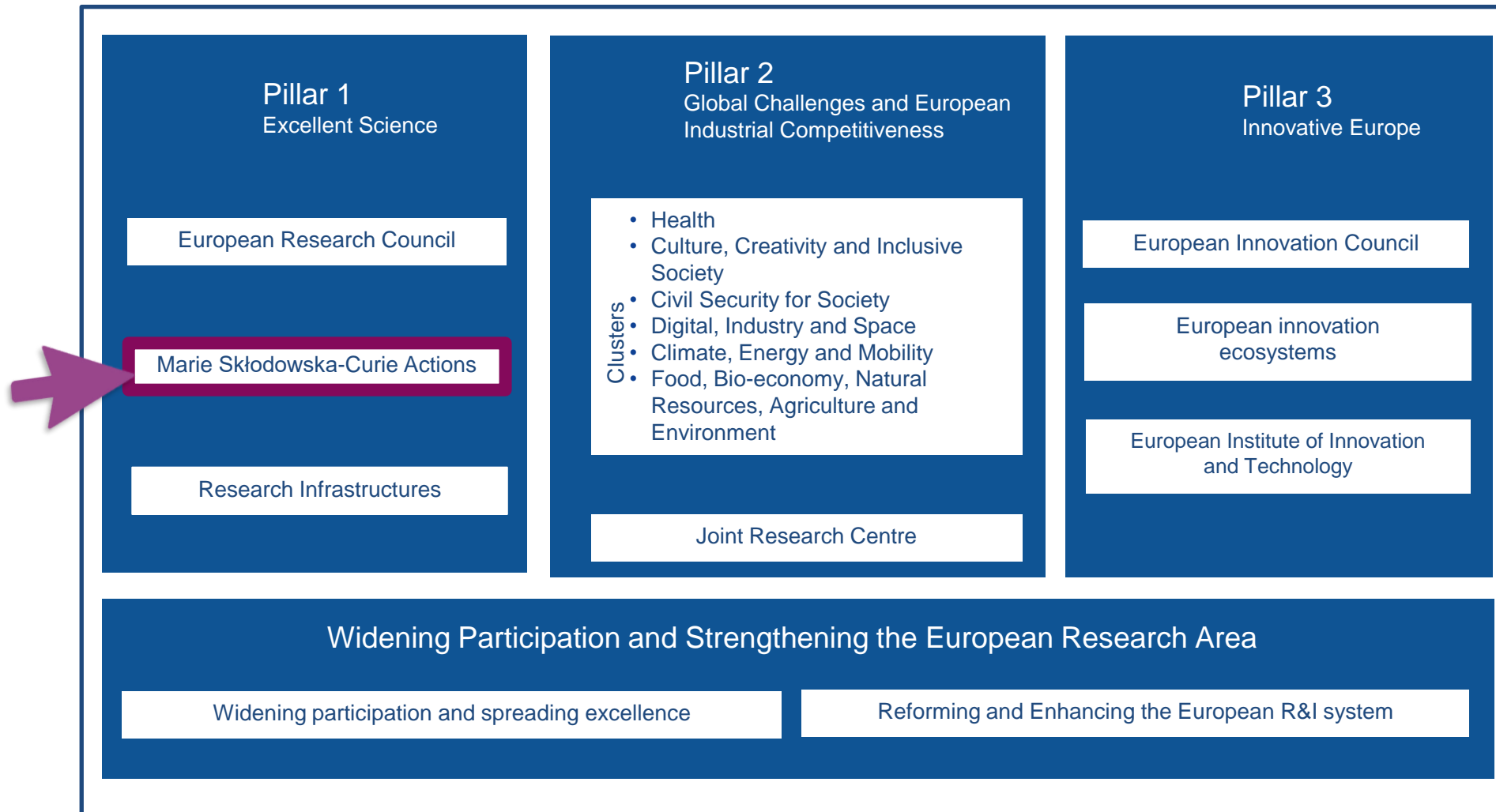
This presentation is based on the conditions and requirements of the MSCA DN 2025 call, as set out in the Horizon Europe MSCA Work Programme 2023 -2025.



# Content

1. **MSCA Work Programme**
2. MSCA Doctoral Networks
3. Eligibility rules
4. Funding mechanism
5. Overview of evaluation process and evaluation criteria
6. 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

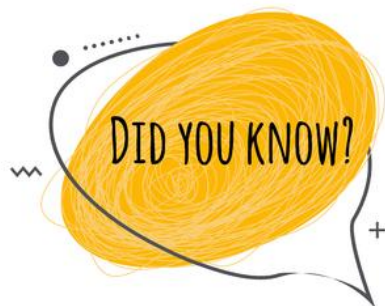
Equipping researchers with new knowledge and skills through mobility and training

**€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**



# 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**

6

## Choose Europe for Science

Supporting attractive & sustainable research careers in Europe for top talent

**2025: €22,5 million**

**DL 03/12/2025**





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# What is a Doctoral Network (DN) project ?

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



# MSCA DN Programme Expected Impacts



**Benefits for both the Doctoral Candidates and Participating Organisations**



## Doctoral Candidates

- Scientific training and transversal skills
- Supervision
- Individual research projects
- Personal development plan
- Intersectoral, international, and interdisciplinary experience
- Long-term employability

## Participating Organisations

- Research and innovation capacity
- Attraction of talent
- Improvement of the training programme
- Cross-sector cooperation and knowledge transfer
- Increase global visibility and attractiveness of organisations

# 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:

Chemistry (CHE), Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC), Economic Sciences (ECO), Information Science and Engineering (ENG), Environment and Geosciences (ENV), Life Sciences (LIF), Mathematics (MAT), Physics (PHY).

# Doctoral Networks – 2025 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.

# 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.**

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

# Eligible participants

## Who can apply?

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

**Min. 3 entities from 3 EU MS/ HE AC  
of which 1 must be from an EU MS**



## Consortia

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

# Participants - Specific cases

- **Restrictions for the protection of European communication networks:**

Entities that are assessed as “**high-risk suppliers**” of mobile network communication equipment (and any entities they own or control) are not eligible to participate as beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners.

- the [EU toolbox on 5G cybersecurity](#)

- **Legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government-controlled territories of Ukraine:**

Because of Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine and Belarus's involvement, organizations based in Russia, Belarus, or areas of Ukraine not controlled by the government cannot take part in this programme. This applies even if they are not affected by EU sanctions. These organizations are not allowed to join in any role as **beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, third parties giving in-kind contributions, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any)**.

For more information, see [the General Annexes, Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2025](#)



# 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

| A. Contributions for recruited researchers<br>Per person-month |                    |                                       |   |  | B. Institutional unit<br>contributions<br>Per person-month |                                      |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| Living allowance   | Mobility allowance | Family allowance**<br>(if applicable) | Long-term leave allowance<br>(if applicable)  | Special needs allowance<br>(if applicable)               | Research, training and networking contribution             | Management and indirect contribution |
| EUR 4010*  | EUR 710            | EUR 660                               | EUR 4720<br>x<br>% covered by the beneficiary | Requested unit <sup>1</sup><br>x<br>(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.

<sup>1</sup> 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

Call closes:  
25/11/2025



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

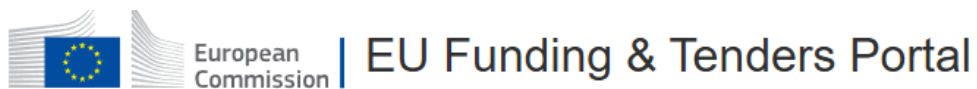
# Doctoral Networks – Award Criteria



| Criteria         | Excellence  | Impact   | Implementation  |
|------------------|---|--|---|
| Sub-criteria     | Quality and pertinence of the project's <b>research and innovation objectives</b> | Contribution to <b>structuring doctoral training</b> at European level and strengthening European innovation capacity  | Quality and effectiveness of the <b>work plan</b> , assessment of <b>risks</b> , and appropriateness of the <b>effort</b> assigned to work packages                                 |
|                  | Soundness of the proposed <b>methodology</b>                                      | Credibility of the measures to enhance the <b>career perspectives</b> of researchers and contribution to their <b>skills development</b>   | <b>Quality, capacity and role of each participant</b> , including hosting arrangements and extent to which the <b>consortium as a whole</b> brings together the necessary expertise |
|                  | Quality and credibility of the <b>training programme</b>                          | Suitability and quality of the measures to <b>maximise expected outcomes</b> and impacts, as set out in the <b>dissemination</b> and <b>exploitation</b> plan, including <b>communication</b> activities |   |
|                  | Quality of the <b>supervision</b>   | The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected <b>scientific, societal</b> and <b>economic</b> impacts   |   |
| <b>Weighting</b> | <b>50%</b>  | <b>30%</b>   | <b>20%</b>  |
| <b>Priority</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>   | <b>3</b>  |



# Doctoral Networks – How to apply?



Home > Funding > Calls for proposals > MSCA Doctoral Networks 2025

## MSCA Doctoral Networks 2025

HORIZON-MSCA-2025-DN-01-01

Topic Call for proposal

### Internal navigation

- General information
- Topic description
- Topic updates
- Destination
- Conditions and documents

### General information

**Programme**  
Horizon Europe (HORIZON)

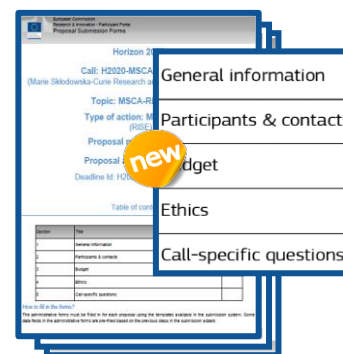
**Call**  
MSCA Doctoral Networks 2025 (HORIZON-MS

**Type of action**  
HORIZON-TMA-MSCA-DN-JD HORIZON TMA  
Networks - Joint Doctorates

## Useful documents

- [DN 2025 Guide for Applicants](#)
- [Proposal templates](#)
- [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***



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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?

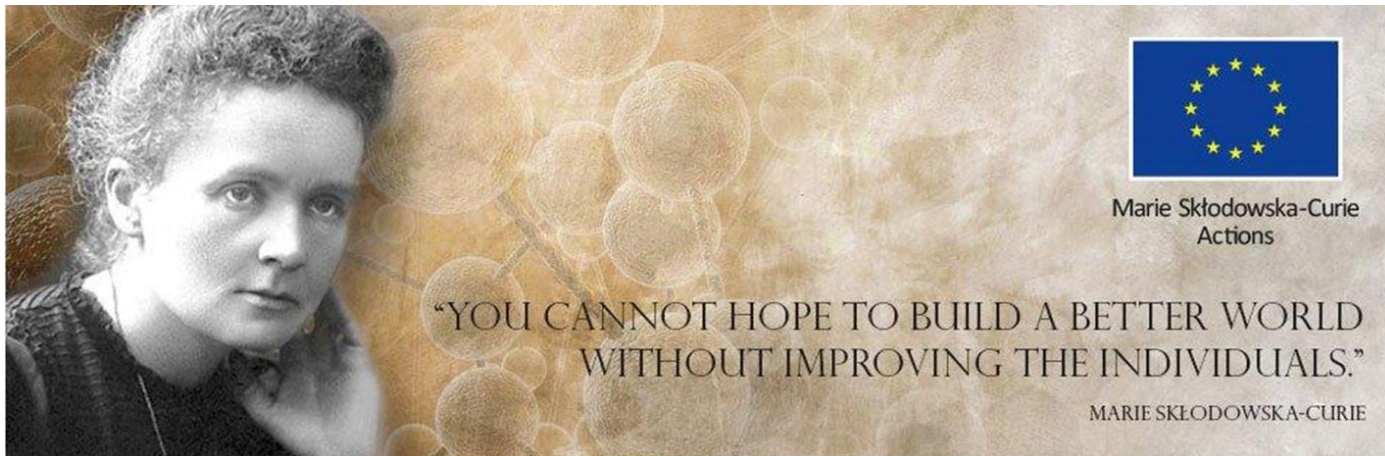
Ask advice to your MSCA / EU  
**National Contact Point**

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



European  
Commission

# Thank you



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