# Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

30 years

*Curiosity that changes the world*

## AVOIDING COMMON MISTAKES IN MSCA DN 2026

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**Jesús ROJO**
**Fundación madri+d**

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# Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training


Microsoft Word - Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training.doc (europa.eu)


MSCA DOCTORAL NETWORK
THE RIGHT ALLIANCE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE
STRONG CONSORTIA BRIGHTER IDEAS
EXPERT EVALUATION
HIGH COMPETITION
LIMITED FUNDING
RESEARCHERS SHAPE A BRIGHTER TOMORROW
EXCELLENCE
DIVERSITY
COMPLEMENTARITY
IMPACT
A HIGH-STAKES CHALLENGE
DEFINE YOUR VISION
Ambitious research and training programme
BUILD A TOP CONSORTIUM
Complementary expertise, sectoral balance, diversity
DESIGN A STRONG PROPOSAL
Excellence, implementation, impact
FACE TOUGH COMPETITION
High-quality proposals, limited budget
AIM FOR IMPACT
Training the next generation of researchers
A FAIRER, STRONGER EUROPE
Through people, knowledge and innovation
MSCA Doctoral Networks
PEOPLE IDEAS OPPORTUNITIES

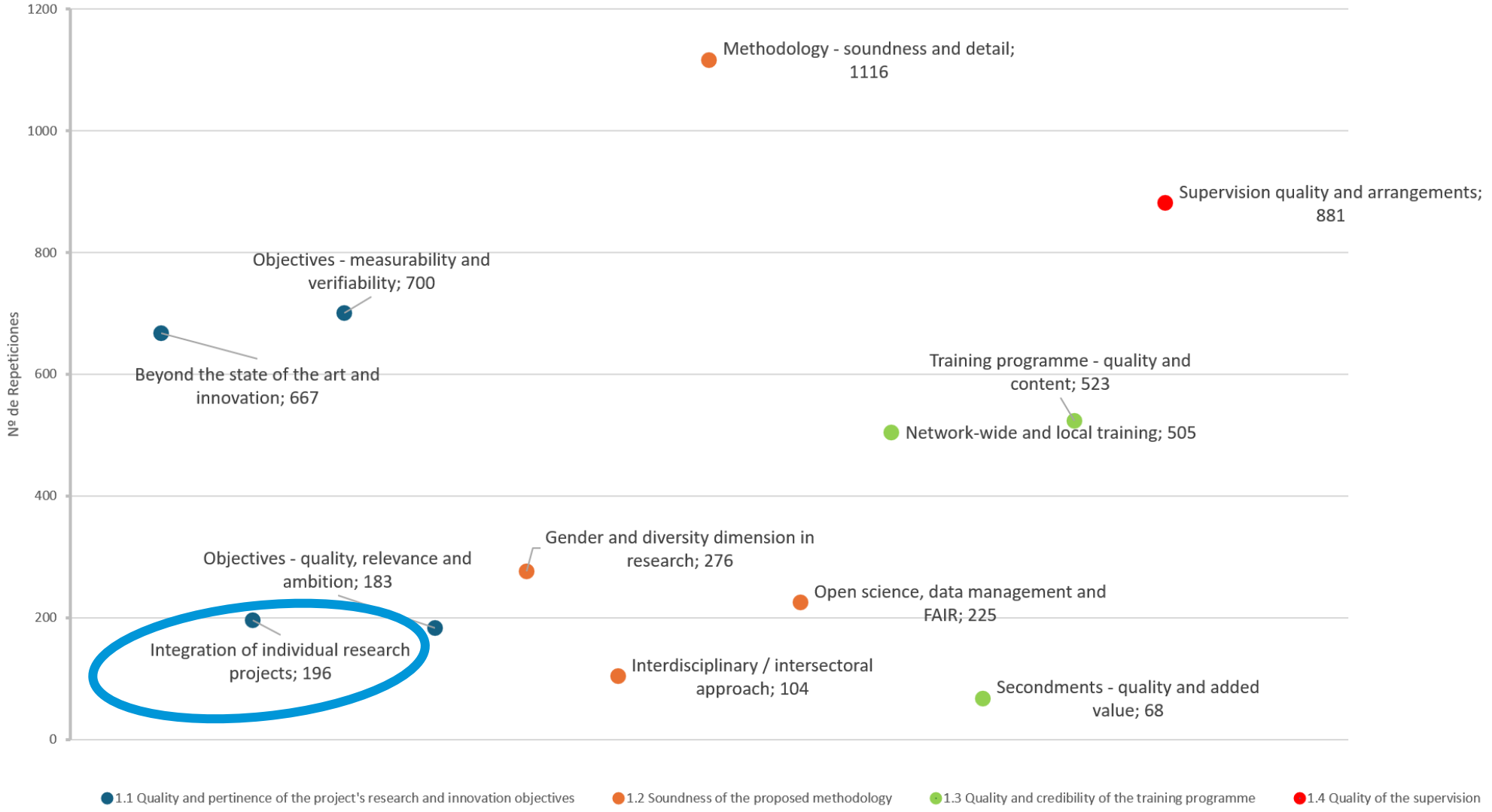
# Doctoral Networks: Evaluation criteria

| Criteria | Weight | Priority (ex.aequo) |
|---|---|---|
| Excellence | 50% | 1 |
| Impact | 30% | 2 |
| Implementation | 20% | 3 |

| Excellence |
|---|
| Quality and pertinence of the project's **research and innovation objectives** (and the extent to which they are ambitious, and go beyond the state of the art) |
| Soundness of the proposed **methodology** (including interdisciplinary approaches, consideration of the gender dimension and other diversity aspects if relevant for the research project, and the quality of open science practices) |
| Quality and credibility of the **training programme** (including transferable skills, inter/multidisciplinary, inter-sectoral and gender as well as other diversity aspects) |
| Quality of the **supervision** (including mandatory joint supervision for industrial and joint doctorate projects) |

# MSCA DN 2025 – EXCELLENCE WEAKNESSES (Nº OF COMMENTS)

## 6550 COMMENTS



# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN IRP

- **210 weakness** comments related to the Individual Research Projects (IRPs).
- They affect **208 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **10.9%** of the 1,916 proposals submitted.
- They account for **11.3%** of the proposals with at least one weakness under Excellence.
- Relation with methodology, supervision and training.

| Panel | IRP Weaknesses | Proposal |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 130 | 129 |
| CHE | 28 | 28 |
| PHY | 16 | 15 |
| LIF | 15 | 15 |
| ENV | 14 | 14 |
| SOC | 6 | 6 |
| MAT | 1 | 1 |
| ECO | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **210** | **208** |

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN IRP

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

- **Integration of Individual Research Projects**
- IRPs appear as separate research lines rather than an integrated programme.
- Connections and dependencies between individual projects are not clearly demonstrated.
- The proposal does not explain how the results of one IRP feed into other projects.
- Individual projects are aligned thematically but lack meaningful scientific interaction.
- The contribution of each IRP to the main research objectives is unclear.
- Synergies, shared methods, datasets or experimental activities are insufficiently described.
- Some projects are peripheral or poorly aligned with the central research programme.

# MSCA DN 2025 – WEAKNESSES Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives

- **2,250 weakness** comments related to the quality of the proposal objectives
- They affect **1,341 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **70.0 %** of the 1,916 proposals submitted.
- They account for **72.6%** of the proposals with at least one weakness under Excellence.

| Panel | Objectives Weaknesses | Proposal |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 130 | 129 |
| CHE | 28 | 28 |
| PHY | 16 | 15 |
| LIF | 15 | 15 |
| ENV | 14 | 14 |
| SOC | 6 | 6 |
| MAT | 1 | 1 |
| ECO | 0 | 0 |
| **Total** | **210** | **208** |

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**State of the art and innovation**

- The proposal does not sufficiently explain how the research advances beyond the state of the art.
- Existing approaches, recent publications or competing technologies are insufficiently reviewed.
- Novelty is presented but not demonstrated through a direct comparison with current methods.
- Proposed techniques are already well established in the relevant field.
- Innovation relies mainly on combining existing approaches.
- The proposal does not identify the limitations or scientific gaps that the project will overcome.
- Some expected advances are incremental rather than genuinely ambitious.

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Quality, relevance and ambition of objectives**

- Objectives are vague, generic or excessively broad.
- Objectives do not provide sufficient scientific focus.
- Highly ambitious targets are not supported by credible evidence.
- Achievability within the proposed timeframe is insufficiently demonstrated.
- The relationship between main objectives and individual scientific questions is unclear.
- Some objectives are application-oriented without identifying the underlying research contribution.

# 1.1. Quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives

- The main research objective of the proposal to address the pressing challenge of plastic waste is overly unspecific. Also, the goals of the individual DC projects, although focused on narrower aspects of the main objective, are defined in a very generic manner. Their **objectives lack clear targets or means to measure and verify their achievements**, because the **proposed use of milestones and deliverables to do so is not suitable** for this purpose. This is a significant weakness.
- The proposed work does **not convincingly demonstrate how it goes beyond the state of the art**, taking into account the significant progress so far in the purification and structural characterisation of some of the mentioned retinal key proteins and similar ones, as well as functional membrane protein incorporation in lipid and polymer membranes and the multitude of examples on planar, 3D, double bilayer spanning protein-based biomimetic catalytic systems to cell and organelle-inspired artificial counterparts as molecular factories. This is a significant weakness.
- The **Individual Research Projects (IRPs) are inadequately detailed in their description**, related to labelling that links relevant Work Packages (WPs) with objectives, and are not fully integrated into the overall research programme, which makes it unclear how they contribute. This is a shortcoming.

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN METHODOLOGY

- **1,377 weakness comments** relate to the soundness and level of detail of the methodology.
- They affect **1,185 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **61.8% of the 1,916 proposals** analysed.
- **64.2%** of the proposals with at least one weakness under Excellence.

| Panel | Methodology Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 567 | 483 |
| LIF | 269 | 256 |
| CHE | 173 | 135 |
| SOC | 131 | 122 |
| PHY | 105 | 83 |
| ENV | 98 | 77 |
| ECO | 24 | 23 |
| MAT | 10 | 6 |
| **Total** | **1,377** | **1,185** |

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN METHODOLOGY

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

- Methods are named but not described in sufficient operational detail.
- Experimental procedures, analytical techniques or computational workflows remain generic.
- The proposal does not explain why the selected methods are appropriate for the research questions.
- Methodological choices are not adequately justified against alternatives.
- Critical technical limitations and methodological assumptions are not discussed.
- The proposal lacks relevant controls, benchmarks, validation procedures or success criteria.
- Sample sizes, statistical methods, replicates or uncertainty analyses are insufficiently explained.
- Dependencies between experimental, computational and modelling activities are unclear.
- Alternative methodological approaches are not provided if the preferred method fails.
- The methodology does not convincingly integrate the individual doctoral projects.

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES in quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Gender and diversity dimension**

- The gender or sex dimension is dismissed without adequate justification.
- The analysis is limited to the gender balance of recruited researchers rather than research content.
- Sex- or gender-related variables are potentially relevant but not integrated into the methodology.
- Diversity or intersectional dimensions are mentioned only generically.
- The proposal does not explain how sex-disaggregated data will be collected or analysed.
- The conclusion that the gender dimension is irrelevant is unsupported.

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES in quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Open science, data management and FAIR practices**

- Open-science practices are described generically.
- Data-sharing arrangements, repositories or access conditions are not specified.
- FAIR principles are mentioned without explaining their practical implementation.
- Data formats, metadata, interoperability or long-term preservation are unclear.
- Reproducibility measures, protocol sharing or preregistration are not sufficiently addressed.
- Tensions between open science, confidentiality, personal data and intellectual-property protection are unresolved.
- Responsibilities for data management are not clearly assigned.

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES in quality and pertinence of the project's research and innovation objectives

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach**

- Disciplines are listed but their methodological integration is not demonstrated.
- The contribution of each discipline to the research objectives is unclear.
- The programme is multidisciplinary rather than genuinely interdisciplinary.
- Intersectoral integration is claimed mainly because companies participate in the consortium.
- Academic and non-academic methods, data or facilities are not meaningfully combined.
- Interactions between experimental, computational, social-science or industrial perspectives are insufficiently developed.

# 1.2. Soundness of the proposed methodology

- The description of the methodology is vague. The proposal does not sufficiently explain how more sustainable energy storage materials, including element/secondary phases, will be developed.
- The overall methodology is not convincing. More specifically, there is no sufficient elaboration on methodologies and tools that will be applied in the research process.
- Some aspects of the methodology are not well outlined. Novel approaches to meteorology aspects, considered as important for blade damages, are not credibly described: e.g. aspects related to the use of micro-radars and high altitude weather radars and downscaling to local wind farm sites are not sufficiently explained.

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN TRAINING

- **607 weakness comments** related with the quality of the training programme
- Affecting **540 distinct proposals**.
- Representing **28.2%** of the **1,916 proposals**.
- **29.2%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Excellence.

| Panel | Training Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 279 | 250 |
| LIF | 91 | 90 |
| CHE | 72 | 61 |
| PHY | 53 | 43 |
| ENV | 52 | 42 |
| SOC | 45 | 41 |
| ECO | 12 | 11 |
| MAT | 3 | 2 |
| **Total** | **607** | **540** |

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN TRAINING

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

- Training events or courses described without sufficient content, depth or expected outcomes.
- Inadequate information about the local or institutional doctoral training available to each researcher.
- Missing learning outcomes, assessment criteria, monitoring procedures or mechanisms to verify skills acquisition.
- Unclear complementarity between network-wide activities and local trainings.
- Insufficient coverage of transferable skills such as entrepreneurship, business development, leadership or communication.
- Training activities that are not sufficiently tailored to individual research projects or researchers' needs.
- Unconvincing duration, timing or workload of particular training activities.

# 1.3. Quality and credibility of the training programme

- The description of the training programme does not sufficiently explain how the activities of the doctoral network complement those offered locally by the hosting institutions of the Doctoral Candidates.
- The content structure of the doctoral training programme is insufficiently explained. It is unclear how the network events complement and extend the local training that will be available to the researchers recruited.
- The proposal does not provide enough information about the involvement of the non-academic sector, despite that needs of this sector are identified in the training programme. This is a minor shortcoming.
- Training in transferable skills is underdeveloped.
- The training programmes offered locally by the participating organisations are not detailed enough.

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN SUPERVISION

- **935 weakness comments** related with the supervision quality and arrangements
- Affecting **821 distinct proposals**.
- Representing **42.8% of the 1,916 proposals** analysed.
- **44.5%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Excellence.

| Panel | Supervision Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 414 | 359 |
| LIF | 175 | 168 |
| CHE | 90 | 77 |
| ENV | 82 | 70 |
| PHY | 79 | 58 |
| SOC | 71 | 68 |
| ECO | 14 | 13 |
| MAT | 10 | 8 |
| **Total** | **935** | **821** |

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN SUPERVISION

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

- Supervisor time commitments that are missing, inconsistent or insufficiently substantiated.
- Unclear frequency of meetings and day-to-day interactions.
- Generic progress-monitoring and feedback procedures.
- Unclear responsibilities between primary supervisors, co-supervisors and mentors.
- Limited evidence of some supervisors' previous doctoral-supervision experience.
- Supervisors' scientific expertise not clearly matched to individual research projects.
- Co-supervisors or industrial mentors mentioned but not formally assigned.
- Insufficient mechanisms for conflict resolution, researcher well-being or additional support.
- Lack of harmonised supervision standards across consortium institutions.

# 1.4. Supervision quality and arrangements

- The role of co-supervisors is not sufficiently described.
- The ability of some participating non-academic organisations to supervise academic-based Doctoral Candidates is not sufficiently elaborated.
- The expertise of the industrial supervisors to supervise the doctoral candidates is not fully evidenced in the proposal
- The role of the non-academic sector is not clearly explained and is mostly limited to co-supervision.
- Some of the suggested supervisors have a limited publication record in state of the art and a not clearly defined research background.
- Matching of the researchers to supervisors, in particular to the second academic partner, is not clearly shown in the proposal.
- The experience in doctorates supervision of the nominated supervisors is insufficiently evidenced.

# Doctoral Networks: Evaluation criteria

| Criteria | Weight | Priority (ex.aequo) |
|---|---|---|
| Excellence | 50% | 1 |
| Impact | 30% | 2 |
| Implementation | 20% | 3 |

| Impact |
|---|
| Contribution to structuring doctoral training at the European level and to **strengthening European innovation capacity**, including the potential for:<br><br>a) meaningful **contribution of the non-academic sector** to the doctoral training, as appropriate to the implementation mode and research field<br><br>b) developing **sustainable elements** of doctoral programmes |
| Credibility of the measures to enhance the **career perspectives and employability** of researchers and contribution to their skills development |
| Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the **dissemination** and **exploitation** plan, including **communication** activities |
| The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected **scientific, societal and economic impacts** |

# MSCA DN 2025 – IMPACT WEAKNESSES (Nº OF COMMENTS)

## 5033 COMMENTS

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN CONTRIBUTION OF NON-ACADEMIC

- **455 weakness comments** directly related to the contribution of the non-academic sector.
- Affecting **440 distinct proposals**.
- Representing **23.0% of the 1,916 proposals** analysed.
- **24.6%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Impact.

| Panel | Non-Academic Contribution Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 186 | 183 |
| LIF | 75 | 74 |
| SOC | 57 | 57 |
| PHY | 48 | 43 |
| ENV | 37 | 35 |
| CHE | 36 | 33 |
| ECO | 10 | 10 |
| MAT | 6 | 5 |
| **Total** | **455** | **440** |

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN IN CONTRIBUTION OF NON-ACADEMIC

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

- Non-academic partners are included in the consortium but have only a limited role in delivering training.
- Industrial participation is largely restricted to hosting secondments.
- Secondments are too short, insufficiently described or do not cover all doctoral candidates.
- Non-academic partners have peripheral roles rather than participating in the design and implementation of the research.
- Their specific tasks, responsibilities and added value are described generically.
- The proposal does not demonstrate how industry expertise will be transferred to the doctoral candidates.
- Exposure to non-academic environments is uneven across the cohort.
- Industrial mentors or supervisors are mentioned but their responsibilities are not sufficiently defined.

# 2.1.a. Meaningful contribution of the non-academic sector to doctoral training

- The exposure of DCs to non-academic partners is imbalanced. In addition, the anticipated contribution of Wiley is not fully credible. This is a shortcoming.,
- The contribution of the non-academic sector to doctoral training is insufficiently described. While three types of contribution are indicated, descriptions for each element are not sufficiently clear.
- The meaningful contribution of the academic and non-academic sector to the doctoral training, as appropriate to the implementation mode and research field, are not well elaborated to contribute to their career perspectives and employability.
- The contribution of the non-academic sector to research and transferable skills in the context of structuring doctoral training at European level is not sufficiently set out in the proposal.
- The researchers' training exposure to the non-academic sector is restricted to the size, scope, and market needs of smaller companies, limiting researchers' exposure to large (possibly national) broadcasters.

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN SUSTAINABILITY

- **447 weakness comments** are related with the development of sustainable elements for doctoral programmes.
- **259 comments** directly concern the sustainability of doctoral training.
- They affect **259 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **13.5% of the 1,916 proposals**
- **14.5%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Impact.

| Panel | Sustainable Elements Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 154 | 154 |
| CHE | 32 | 32 |
| ENV | 27 | 27 |
| LIF | 23 | 23 |
| PHY | 16 | 16 |
| SOC | 5 | 5 |
| ECO | 1 | 1 |
| MAT | 1 | 1 |
| **Total** | **259** | **259** |

# MSCA DN 2025 –WEAKNESSES IN SUSTAINABLE ELEMENTS OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES AFTER DN FUNDING

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

- The proposal expresses an intention to continue activities but provides no concrete commitments.
- Responsibility for maintaining post-project activities is not assigned.
- No financial, institutional or governance arrangements are presented.
- Training modules are not formally integrated into existing doctoral curricula.
- Future collaboration between consortium partners is presented as an expectation rather than a concrete plan.
- Training schools, workshops, secondments or industrial engagement depend on future funding that has not been identified.
- Repositories, digital platforms and recorded training materials lack maintenance and updating arrangements.
- Sustainable elements are described generically and are not specific to the proposed Doctoral Network.

# 2.1.b. Development of sustainable elements of doctoral programmes after DN funding

- The sustainability elements of the programme beyond XXXXX lifetime were not articulated in sufficient detail, beyond some generic references to mobility or training agreements. - The exploitation plan is insufficiently defined.
- The sustainability of the proposed training beyond the immediate scope of the proposal in terms of continuation of training programmes at local or network level, collaboration and transferable skills training is not sufficiently planned and unclear. This is a major shortcoming.
- The sustainability of the doctoral programme beyond the end of the DN funding is insufficiently described with few tangible elements. The targets to structure local environments or to pursue doctoral opportunities within the consortium are not described clearly enough.
- The plan for sustaining the doctoral programs after the end of funding is insufficiently clear; there is not sufficient information on how doctoral programmes will be sustained in the future other than having an administrative network in place.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Career perspectives, employability and skills development

- **589 weakness comments** are related with the career perspectives and employability
- They affect **259 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **28.3% of the 1,916 proposals**
- **30.4%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Impact.

| Panel | Career perspectives Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 273 | 243 |
| CHE | 59 | 55 |
| ENV | 36 | 34 |
| LIF | 100 | 97 |
| PHY | 38 | 34 |
| SOC | 66 | 64 |
| ECO | 10 | 10 |
| MAT | 7 | 6 |
| **Total** | **589** | **543** |

# MSCA DN 2025 – Career perspectives, employability and skills development

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

- The available career paths are too narrow or insufficiently diverse.
- Measures are described generically, without explaining how they will improve employability.
- The proposal concentrates on academic careers and gives insufficient attention to industry, public-sector or other non-academic opportunities.
- Training activities are listed without demonstrating a credible connection to career outcomes.
- Career support is not sufficiently personalised through career-development plans, mentoring, coaching or networking.
- The proposal lacks indicators for assessing whether the measures actually improve researchers' employability.

# 2.2. Career perspectives, employability and skills development

- The added value of the Doctoral Network in terms of job opportunities and employability is not convincingly covered.
- The measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of the researchers and contribution to their skills development are very generically presented. This is a major weakness.
- The impact of research and training on the future career of researchers and improving employability in both academia and industry is not sufficiently argued.
- The proposal falls short in tangibly articulating the potential impact of the proposed research and training on career perspectives and skills development of the doctoral candidates.
- The description of measures to enhance career perspectives is general and lacks a concrete mapping between the acquired skills and the defined career paths, failing to demonstrate how specific training activities directly equip DCs for these diverse roles. This represents a shortcoming.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Dissemination, exploitation and communication plan and activities

- **1.251 weakness comments** are related with dissemination, exploit and communication activities
- They affect **999 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **52.1% of the 1,916 proposals**
- **56.0%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Impact.

| Panel | Diss Comm Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 651 | 500 |
| CHE | 129 | 103 |
| ENV | 92 | 69 |
| LIF | 181 | 168 |
| PHY | 73 | 51 |
| SOC | 88 | 83 |
| ECO | 26 | 20 |
| MAT | 11 | 5 |
| **Total** | 1,251 | 999 |

# MSCA DN 2025 – Career perspectives, employability and skills development

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Dissemination plan and measures**

- Activities remain generic and rely mainly on publications and conferences.
- Dissemination channels, responsibilities or timelines are insufficiently specified.
- Measures are not sufficiently connected to particular project results.
- The expected reach, uptake or influence of dissemination activities is unclear.
- Plans do not adequately differentiate between scientific, industrial, policy and other stakeholder audiences.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Career perspectives, employability and skills development

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Dissemination plan and measures**

- Activities remain generic and rely mainly on publications and conferences.
- Dissemination channels, responsibilities or timelines are insufficiently specified.
- Measures are not sufficiently connected to particular project results.
- The expected reach, uptake or influence of dissemination activities is unclear.
- Plans do not adequately differentiate between scientific, industrial, policy and other stakeholder audiences.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Career perspectives, employability and skills development

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Exploitation plan and measures**

- Exploitation measures are described only at a general level.
- Exploitable results are not clearly identified.
- Exploitation pathways are not linked to specific project outputs.
- Plans for industrial uptake, commercialisation, licensing, standardisation or spin-off creation lack detail.
- Responsibilities and decision-making processes for exploitation are unclear.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Career perspectives, employability and skills development

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Monitoring, indicators and KPIs**

- Indicators are absent, generic or insufficiently measurable.
- Targets are not quantified.
- Indicators measure outputs—such as the number of events or posts—rather than uptake, engagement or influence.
- Timelines, baselines and monitoring responsibilities are unclear.
- The proposal does not explain how the effectiveness of dissemination and communication will be assessed.

# 2.3.a. Dissemination, exploitation and communication plan and activities

- The proposal insufficiently describes the communication strategy with regards to the quantifiable measures. The public engagement activities are insufficiently discussed.
- the adaptation of the measures to the target groups is not sufficiently considered. For example, it is not sufficiently described how the industrial dissemination days will be adapted or communicated to the non-expert public. This is a minor shortcoming.
- The dissemination, communication, and exploitation plans are described; however, they remain generic, with limited rationale for differentiating activities by objective and target audience, and largely insufficient indicators to enable robust measurement of progress. This constitutes a shortcoming.,
- The target groups are not clearly identified and a clear strategy for public engagement is not properly presented. This is a shortcoming.
- The performance indicators considered to monitor communication and impact activities are generic and do not consistently assess or promote effective engagement of target audiences beyond specific activities. This is a minor shortcoming.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Intellectual property management and protection measures

- **427 weakness comments** are related with dissemination, exploit and communication activities
- They affect **418 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **21.8% of the 1,916 proposals**
- **23.4%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Impact.

| Panel | IPR Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 201 | 199 |
| CHE | 43 | 42 |
| ENV | 29 | 29 |
| LIF | 71 | 71 |
| PHY | 39 | 34 |
| SOC | 37 | 36 |
| ECO | 4 | 4 |
| MAT | 3 | 3 |
| **Total** | 589 | 543 |

# MSCA DN 2025 – Intellectual property management and protection measures

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

- The IP strategy is mentioned but remains generic, preliminary or too briefly described.
- Proposals do not clearly identify which expected results may generate intellectual property.
- The relationship between the IP strategy and the exploitation pathway is insufficiently explained.
- Background knowledge, foreground results, ownership, joint ownership and access rights are not adequately addressed.
- Responsibilities for identifying, protecting and managing IP are unclear.
- Procedures for resolving conflicts between beneficiaries or between academic and industrial partners are missing.
- Protection paths such as patents, licences, trade secrets, design rights or copyright are not linked to specific results.
- The balance between publication, open science obligations and the protection of commercially relevant results is not convincingly established.
- Some proposals rely on institutional technology-transfer offices

# 2.3.b. Intellectual property management and protection measures

- The presentation of the outline strategy for the management of intellectual property is overly generic and it is not sufficiently clear that it is well suited for the exploitation of results. This is a minor shortcoming.
- The intellectual property (IP) management is adequately outlined, however, the translation of IP into concrete IP strategies is insufficiently detailed. This is a minor shortcoming.
- The strategy for intellectual property management is overall adequate, however IPR management in third countries is not adequately addressed. This is a minor shortcoming.
- The plans for exploitation of results are not clearly identified. Intellectual property management aspects are in general underdeveloped.
- IPR management is planned to be handled at the partner level, although coordination between partners and /or regular monitoring of IPR opportunities are not adequately described. Leveraging IP to support exploitation is also insufficiently described.
- Protection measures for intellectual property management are only foreseen generically as part of the Grant and Consortium Agreements. There are no clear explanations for how the anticipated protection measures will support exploitation, and exploitation channels are only generically identified.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Magnitude and importance of scientific, societal and economic impacts

- **1.379 weakness comments** are related with the magnitude and importance of impacts
- They affect **1.039 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **54.2% of the 1,916 proposals**
- **58.2%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Impact.

| Panel | Impact Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 708 | 501 |
| CHE | 133 | 100 |
| ENV | 87 | 63 |
| LIF | 227 | 204 |
| PHY | 89 | 54 |
| SOC | 115 | 101 |
| ECO | 13 | 11 |
| MAT | 7 | 5 |
| **Total** | 1.379 | 1.039 |

# 2.4. Magnitude and importance of scientific, societal and economic impacts

- The lack of credible evaluation of practical research outcomes linked to real-world applications limits their impact beyond the immediate scope and duration of the programme.
- The proposal does not clearly demonstrate how the planned activities and results will translate into the claimed scientific impact. This is a shortcoming.
- The scientific impact is presented in a generic way, focusing rather on general changes connected to energy transition and not specifically about the outcomes of the project. This is a shortcoming.
- Economic impacts, such as job creation and financial benefits, are not sufficiently addressed, which is a minor shortcoming.
- The technological and economic impacts mentioned in the proposal are overstated, as it does not provide a credible roadmap towards market-readiness. This is a minor shortcoming.
- The expected societal impact is not clearly demonstrated. For example, the proposal does not fully evidence the societal implications (e.g. digital inclusion, well- being in immersive environments) and the alignment with relevant European policy goals. This is a minor shortcoming.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Magnitude and importance of scientific, societal and economic impacts

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

## Magnitude and quantification

- The proposal does not quantify the expected scale of the impact.
- Indicators, baselines, benchmarks or target values are missing.
- Claims are based on broad market figures rather than the project's expected results.
- The proposal does not explain how many users, organisations, sectors or citizens could benefit.
- The timeframe over which the impact would materialise is unclear.

## Scientific impact

- The anticipated scientific advances are not clearly distinguished from incremental progress.
- The proposal does not sufficiently identify the scientific communities that will benefit.
- Claims about advancing the state of the art are not supported by concrete expected results.
- The longer-term influence on the research field is described without measurable evidence.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Magnitude and importance of scientific, societal and economic impacts

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

## Societal and environmental impact

- Societal benefits are described in broad or generic terms.
- The link between research results and health, environmental or social outcomes is indirect.
- Environmental benefits such as emissions reductions, resource savings or waste prevention are not quantified.
- Relevant end users, patients, policymakers or societal stakeholders are insufficiently involved.
- Regulatory, behavioural or adoption barriers are not adequately considered.

## Economic and technological impact

- Expected results are not convincingly connected to market or industrial benefits.
- Pathways towards commercialisation, industrial uptake or technology transfer are unclear.
- Scalability and progression from laboratory results to practical application are insufficiently explained.
- The proposal does not compare the technology with existing or emerging alternatives.
- Market demand, adoption barriers, competitiveness and implementation costs are not substantiated.

# Redes Doctorales: Criterios de Evaluación

| Criteria | Weight | Priority (ex.aequo) |
|---|---|---|
| Excellence | 50% | 1 |
| Impact | 30% | 2 |
| Implementation | 20% | 3 |

| Quality and efficiency of the implementation |
|---|
| Quality and effectiveness of the **work plan**, **assessment of risks** and appropriateness of the **effort** assigned to work packages |
| Quality, capacity and role of each **participant**, including hosting arrangements and extent to which **the consortium** as a whole brings together the necessary expertise |

# MSCA DN 2025 – IMPACT WEAKNESSES (Nº OF COMMENTS)

## 3057 COMMENTS

# MSCA DN 2025 – Work plan, risks and appropriateness of effort assigned to work packages

- **2,355 weakness comments** are related with dissemination, exploit and communication activities
- They affect **1.609 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **84.0% of the 1,916 proposals**
- **94.1%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Impact.

| Panel | Work plant Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 1,198 | 757 |
| CHE | 263 | 161 |
| ENV | 156 | 106 |
| LIF | 368 | 307 |
| PHY | 166 | 93 |
| SOC | 162 | 153 |
| ECO | 27 | 24 |
| MAT | 15 | 8 |
| **Total** | **2,355** | **1,609** |

# MSCA DN 2025 – Work plan, risks and appropriateness of effort assigned to work packages

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Work plan and work packages**

- Work packages are described at an excessively abstract level.
- Tasks, responsibilities and expected results are insufficiently detailed.
- Connections and dependencies between work packages are unclear.
- The timing and sequencing of interdependent activities are not credible.
- Parallel work packages depend on results that may not yet be available.
- Individual research projects and secondments are not fully integrated into the overall implementation logic.

**Effort and resources**

- Person-months or other resources are not convincingly linked to the workload.
- The time allocated to technically demanding tasks is insufficient or unjustified.
- Workload distribution between beneficiaries, doctoral candidates or work packages is uneven.
- Resource allocation is inconsistent with the complexity or timing of the planned activities.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Work plan, risks and appropriateness of effort assigned to work packages

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

## Risks and mitigation

- Scientific and technical risks are omitted or treated too generally.
- Proposals focus on administrative risks while underrepresenting research risks.
- Mitigation measures are generic, such as “close monitoring” or using an unspecified alternative method.
- Contingency measures repeat activities already included in the methodology rather than providing genuine alternatives.
- Risk probability or severity is underestimated without adequate justification.
- High dependencies between work packages are not reflected in the risk assessment.
- Decision triggers, thresholds, escalation procedures and risk owners are not defined.

## Milestones and deliverables

- Milestones are formulated as activities or outputs rather than decision points.
- Deliverables are vague, intangible or insufficiently connected to specific tasks.
- Means of verification and measurable acceptance criteria are missing.
- Deliverables and milestones are scheduled too late to support effective monitoring.
- Their number is excessive, insufficient or inconsistent with the research plan.
- Some scientific conclusions are presented as deliverables without a verifiable output.
- Training and recruitment progress is not adequately covered by milestones.

# 3.1. Work plan, risks and appropriateness of effort assigned to work packages

- The work plan is not sufficiently convincing on the specific roles and tasks assigned to some DCs. Additionally, the proposed collaborations between them are not always adequately defined or well-articulated. This is a minor shortcoming.
- the overall coherence of the work package sequencing and their interdependencies are not convincing, which creates some uncertainty regarding the robustness of the implementation timeline. This is a shortcoming.
- The duration of all work packages is not adequate. Each work package covers the entire project duration, with no phase differentiation to reflect project maturation or sequential dependencies between activities. This is a shortcoming.
- Concentrating most of the deliverables in the final six months of the project can affect the quality of progress monitoring throughout the entire project. This is a minor shortcoming.
- Most milestones are scheduled toward the later stages of the project (around month 36), reducing their effectiveness as tools for progress monitoring. This is a shortcoming.
- A number of connected deliverables are presented in a rather generic manner, making progress monitoring more difficult. This is a shortcoming.

# 3.1. Work plan, risks and appropriateness of effort assigned to work packages

- The risk analysis is insufficient, comprised of only four risks, three of which are managerial. Several of the existing mitigation measures remain generic, lacking specificity on contingency paths for high risk items. Scientific and technical risks are largely unaddressed. This is a minor shortcoming.
- While the main risks are appropriately identified, the description of both risks and mitigation measures remain at a high level of abstraction, with insufficient operational detail on inter-dependencies, implementation and decision-making. This constitutes a shortcoming.
- The risk management is not sufficiently robust, as several technical and implementation risks are described in overly general terms, and the corresponding mitigation measures are not sufficiently specific. This is evidenced by (i) generic remedial actions in the case of delays in access to key research infrastructure, (ii) an incomplete treatment of numerical-modelling risks, and (iii) limited evaluation of risks affecting the application to case studies. This constitutes a shortcoming
- The timing of the recruitment procedure (and the possible negative impact on the synchronisation of the doctoral projects) is not fully clear from the presented proposal text, this is identified as a minor shortcoming.
- Insufficient details are provided on the recruitment process.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Quality, capacity and role of participants and consortium expertise

- **677 weakness comments** are related with dissemination, exploit and communication activities
- They affect **568 distinct proposals**.
- They represent **29.6% of the 1,916 proposals**
- **33.2%** of proposals with at least one weakness under Impact.

| Panel | Participants Weakness comments | Proposals affected |
|---|---|---|
| ENG | 367 | 295 |
| CHE | 60 | 52 |
| ENV | 43 | 33 |
| LIF | 75 | 73 |
| PHY | 45 | 32 |
| SOC | 70 | 68 |
| ECO | 11 | 10 |
| MAT | 6 | 5 |
| **Total** | **677** | **568** |

# MSCA DN 2025 – Work plan, risks and appropriateness of effort assigned to work packages

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

## Roles and contributions

- The roles of some beneficiaries or associated partners are described only generally.
- Contributions are not linked to specific tasks, doctoral projects, training activities or deliverables.
- Participants with similar profiles are not sufficiently differentiated.
- The proposal does not explain the operational involvement of partners beyond training events.
- Responsibilities for shared platforms, facilities or project-wide activities are unclear.
- The commitment of particular partners is insufficiently demonstrated.

## Consortium expertise and complementarity

- Complementarity is asserted but not demonstrated through a clear mapping of expertise to activities.
- Several partners appear to provide overlapping expertise without sufficient justification.
- The unique contribution or added value of individual participants is unclear.
- Expertise gaps remain in specific scientific, technical, regulatory, clinical or commercial areas.
- Academic and non-academic capacities are not combined in a convincing way.
- The consortium does not fully exploit the available complementarity between participants.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Work plan, risks and appropriateness of effort assigned to work packages

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

## Infrastructure and operational capacity

- Infrastructure is described generically rather than for each participant and doctoral project.
- Access to specialist laboratories, pilot facilities, datasets or high-performance computing is uncertain.
- The proposal does not provide contingency arrangements if access to critical facilities is delayed.
- Capacity differs substantially between hosts without explaining how the gaps will be addressed.
- Some associated partners' facilities and resources are not described.
- The infrastructure is not convincingly connected to the tasks assigned to each organisation.

## Hosting arrangements

- The integration of doctoral candidates into host institutions is insufficiently explained.
- Administrative, technical, mentoring or institutional support is described only broadly.
- Hosting arrangements at associated or non-academic partners lack operational detail.
- The specific working environment available to each doctoral candidate is unclear.
- Proposals do not explain how access to facilities and support will be maintained during secondments.

# MSCA DN 2025 – Work plan, risks and appropriateness of effort assigned to work packages

**Evaluators commonly identify:**

**Eligibility and secondments**

- Some doctoral enrolments are planned outside an EU Member State or Horizon Europe associated country.
- Certain secondments exceed the permitted share of the fellowship without sufficient justification.
- The duration, timing or purpose of some secondments is not convincingly connected to the individual research project.
- The role of the secondment host is insufficiently defined.

# 3.2. Quality, capacity and role of participants and consortium expertise

- The proposal does not provide adequate information on the extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the required expertise, as this information exceeds the page limit of 30 pages in Part B1 (sections 1, 2, 3) and is therefore disregarded.
- Hosting arrangements to support the integration of the DCs are not convincingly elaborated in the proposal.
- The expertise in the consortium related to Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning is not demonstrated to be sufficient to implement the relevant research and training programme, which a minor shortcoming.
- Not all the infrastructure, facilities, and equipment required to carry out the tasks allocated to the beneficiaries and associated partners are sufficiently evidenced, for example, the availability of specific software and licenses required for the relevant modelling tasks.
- The complementary expertise of the participating organizations is not sufficiently well articulated.

# Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

30 years

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**GRACIAS**

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