MSCA DN 2025 Call
Evaluation Results
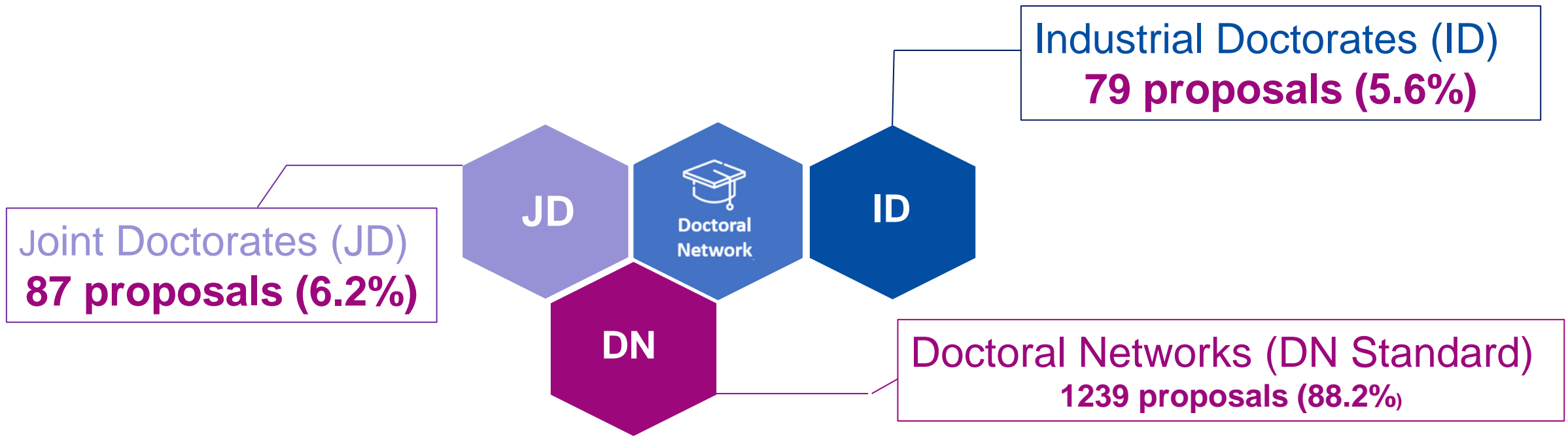May 30th 2025

Content

Call MSCA DN 2025

- Statistics MSCA DN 2024
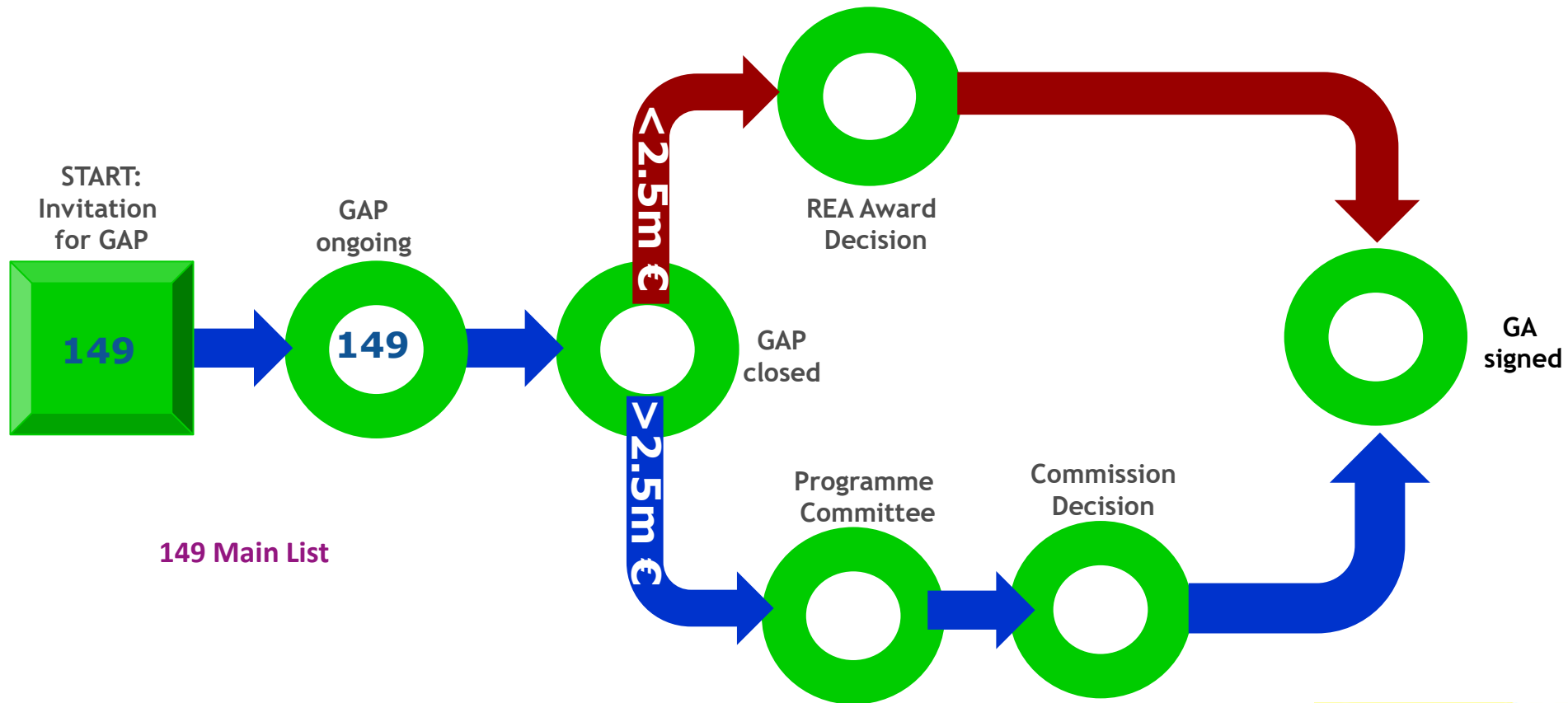- ESR analysis
- The NEW Matchmaking Platform

DN 2024 call Evaluation results

- **MSCA DN 2024 call budget:** ~ €608.6 m
- **1417 submitted proposals:** 6 ineligible; 6 withdrawn; **1405 evaluated**
- **Type of Action distribution:**

Industrial Doctorates (ID)
79 proposals (5.6%)

Joint Doctorates (JD)
87 proposals (6.2%)

Doctoral Networks (DN Standard)
1239 proposals (88.2%)

DN 2024 call Grant Agreement Preparation

GAP launched on 2 April 2025 – status on 12 April

START: Invitation for GAP — 149

GAP ongoing — 149

<2.5m €

GAP closed

>2.5m €

REA Award Decision

Programme Committee

Commission Decision

GA signed

149 Main List

DN 2024 call Success rates per panel/ mode

Main list * proposals
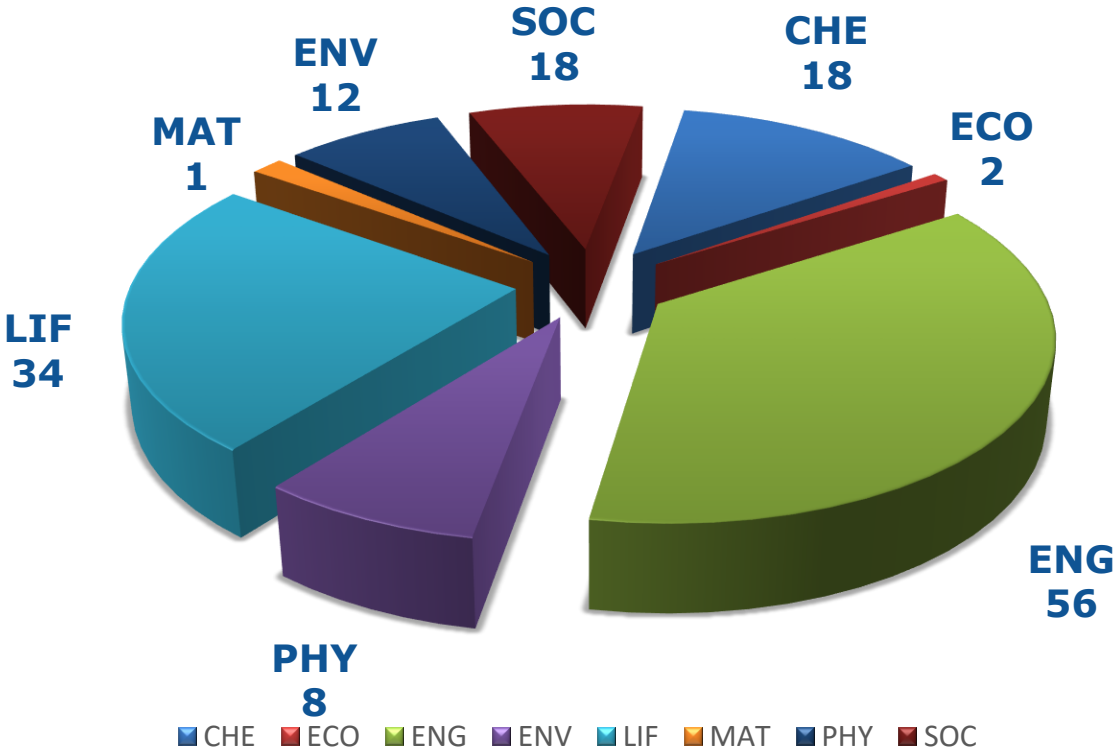
Panel	DN	DN-ID	DN-JD	Total
CHE	15	2	1	**18**
ECO	2			**2**
ENG	47	6	3	**56**
ENV	11		1	**12**
LIF	33		1	**34**
MAT	1			**1**
PHY	8			**8**
SOC	16		2	**18**
Total	**133**	**8**	**8**	**149**
Success Rate	**10.7%**	**10.1%**	**9.2%**	**10.6%**

|	CHE	ECO	ENG	ENV	LIF	MAT	PHY	SOC	Total
	10.8%	11.1%	10.8%	10.0%	10.3%	5.9%	8.6%	12.7%	10.6%

*pending the signature of the GAs

DN 2024 call Percentile table

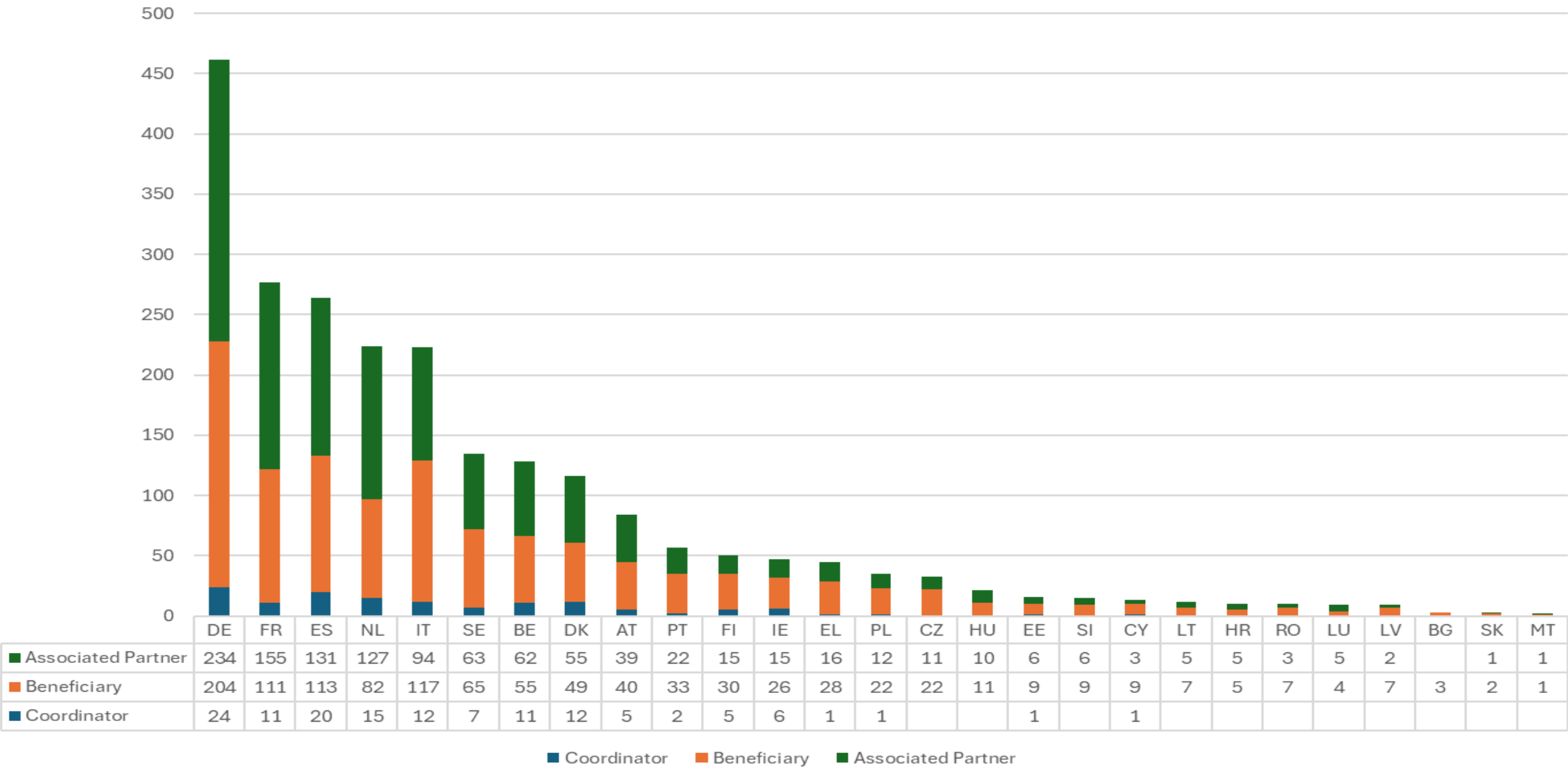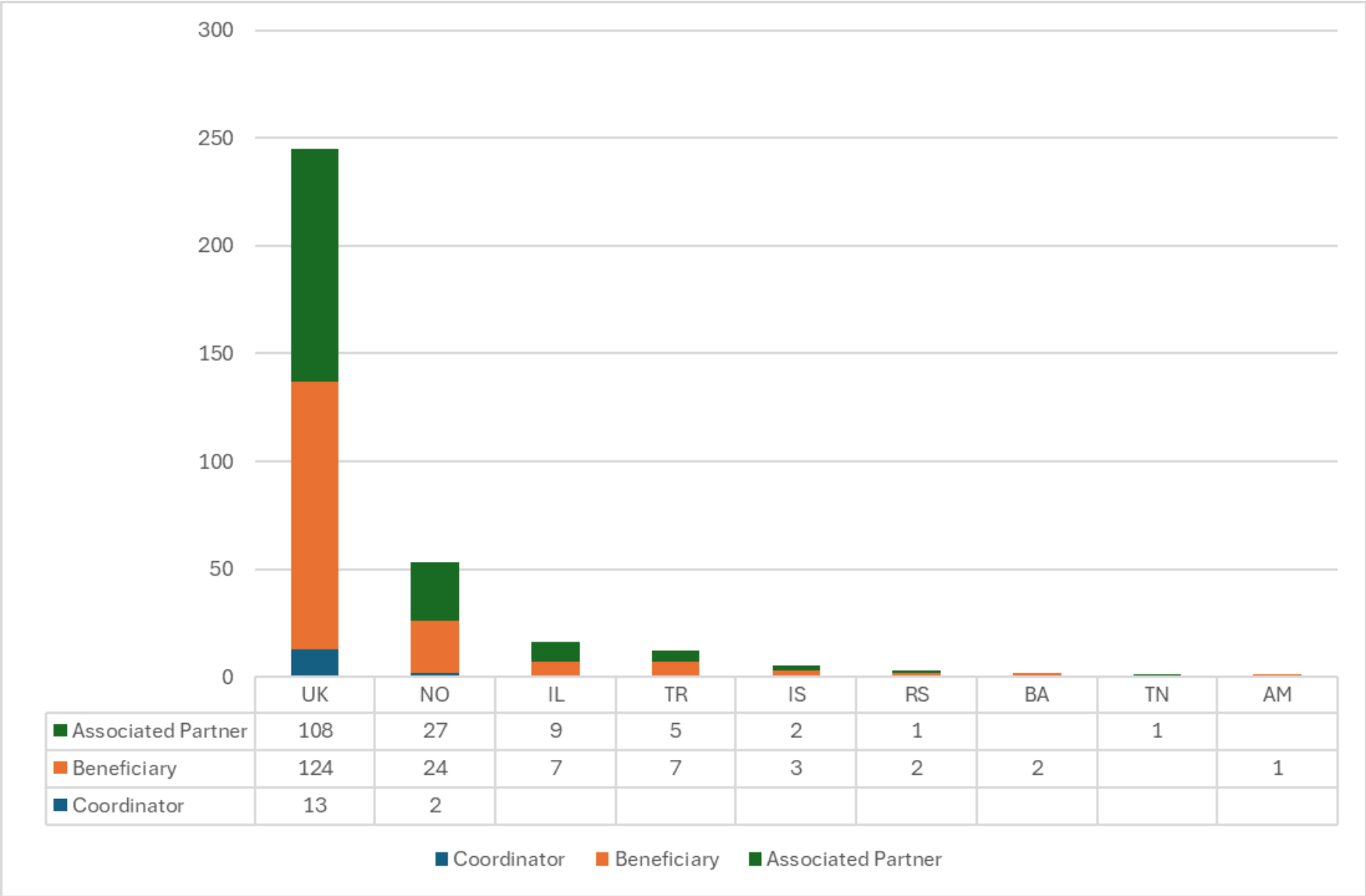|	MSCA-DN-2024: Cumulative percentage of proposals above threshold, with a given score or higher (with funding range marked in green)								
Number of eligible proposals	**166**	**18**	**520**	**120**	**329**	**17**	**93**	**142**	**1405**
Cut off score for funding	**97**	**94.2**	**96.6**	**97.2**	**95.6**	**98.8**	**95.6**	**95.4**	
Score equal to or above	**CHE**	**ECO**	**ENG**	**ENV**	**LIF**	**MAT**	**PHY**	**SOC**	**Grand Total**
100	2.41%	0.00%	1.15%	3.33%	1.22%	0.00%	3.23%	2.11%	1.71%
99	2.41%	0.00%	1.92%	3.33%	2.13%	0.00%	4.30%	2.11%	2.28%
98	6.63%	5.56%	6.15%	9.17%	3.65%	5.88%	6.45%	5.63%	5.84%
97	10.84%	5.56%	9.42%	11.67%	6.38%	11.76%	7.53%	7.04%	8.68%
96	15.66%	5.56%	13.27%	13.33%	8.51%	11.76%	7.53%	9.15%	11.53%
95	21.08%	5.56%	16.35%	15.83%	13.98%	17.65%	12.90%	13.38%	15.66%
94	23.49%	11.11%	21.15%	20.00%	18.84%	23.53%	20.43%	16.20%	20.14%
93	29.52%	16.67%	26.35%	23.33%	23.10%	23.53%	20.43%	20.42%	24.56%
92	33.13%	16.67%	31.73%	25.83%	27.05%	23.53%	23.66%	21.13%	28.40%
91	40.36%	16.67%	35.58%	30.00%	31.91%	29.41%	32.26%	22.54%	32.95%
90	45.18%	22.22%	38.27%	33.33%	34.95%	35.29%	37.63%	26.06%	36.37%
89	49.40%	27.78%	41.35%	39.17%	39.21%	35.29%	43.01%	28.87%	40.21%
88	52.41%	27.78%	45.58%	40.00%	43.47%	41.18%	48.39%	30.99%	43.84%
87	56.63%	27.78%	51.35%	42.50%	45.90%	47.06%	49.46%	37.32%	48.04%
86	59.64%	27.78%	54.81%	46.67%	48.33%	52.94%	52.69%	42.25%	51.39%
85	66.27%	27.78%	57.31%	50.00%	53.80%	58.82%	60.22%	45.07%	55.52%
84	68.67%	27.78%	60.96%	52.50%	57.45%	58.82%	62.37%	46.48%	58.51%
83	71.69%	27.78%	66.73%	56.67%	62.31%	58.82%	65.59%	52.82%	63.35%

DN 2021-2024 cut off
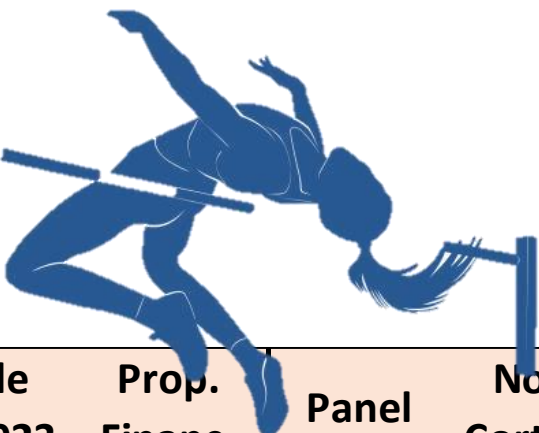
Panel	Nota de Corte 2021	Prop. Financ.	Panel	Nota de Corte 2022	Prop. Financ.	Panel	Nota de Corte 2023	Prop. Financ.	Panel	Nota de Corte 2024	Prop. Financ.
CHE	93,2	18	CHE	95,0	19	CHE	96,2	16	CHE	97	18
ECO	84,4	2	ECO	95,8	1	ECO	95,0	1	ECO	94,2	2
ENG	94,2	48	ENG	95,2	50	ENG	96,0	47	ENG	96,6	56
ENV	95,2	14	ENV	95,0	14	ENV	96,4	10	ENV	97,2	12
LIF	92,8	35	LIF	93,2	39	LIF	96,0	31	LIF	95,6	34
MAT	100	1	MAT	95,0	2	MAT	97,6	2	MAT	98,8	1
PHY	92,8	11	PHY	93,8	11	PHY	97,2	10	PHY	95,6	8
SOC	88,8	15	SOC	93,4	13	SOC	96,2	11	SOC	95,4	18
TOTAL		**144**	**TOTAL**		**149**	**TOTAL**		**128**	**TOTAL**		**149**

DN 2024 call MS in main list

	DE	FR	ES	NL	IT	SE	BE	DK	AT	PT	FI	IE	EL	PL	CZ	HU	EE	SI	CY	LT	HR	RO	LU	LV	BG	SK	MT
■ Associated Partner	234	155	131	127	94	63	62	55	39	22	15	15	16	12	11	10	6	6	3	5	5	3	5	2		1	1
■ Beneficiary	204	111	113	82	117	65	55	49	40	33	30	26	28	22	22	11	9	9	9	7	5	7	4	7	3	2	1
■ Coordinator	24	11	20	15	12	7	11	12	5	2	5	6	1	1			1		1								

■ Coordinator   ■ Beneficiary   ■ Associated Partner

DN 2024 call AC in main list

	UK	NO	IL	TR	IS	RS	BA	TN	AM
■ Associated Partner	108	27	9	5	2	1		1	
■ Beneficiary	124	24	7	7	3	2	2		1
■ Coordinator	13	2							

■ Coordinator ■ Beneficiary ■ Associated Partner

DN 2024 call OTC in main list

	CH	US	CA	AU	BR	UZ	ZA	JP	AW	KE	AR	CO	IN	KG	KZ	KR	MP	SG	TJ	CN	CR	GH	GL	GU	MU	MX	SA	TM	UG
■ Associated Partner	96	44	9	9	8	8	6	6	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
■ Beneficiary	3		2		1		2		1	1	1	1									1								1
■ Coordinator																													

■ Coordinator ■ Beneficiary ■ Associated Partner
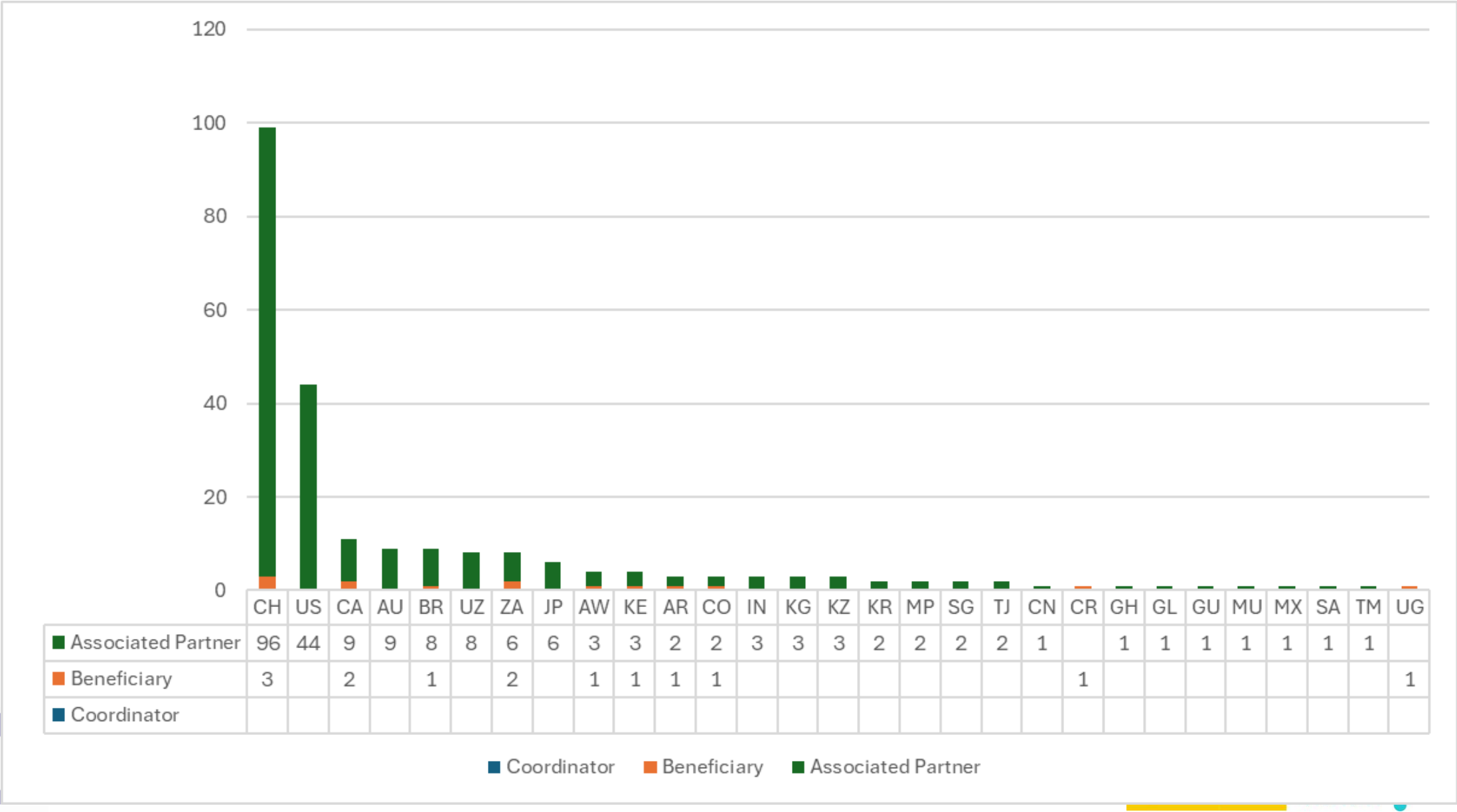
DN 2024 call Evaluation feedback

❖ **Very smooth process, robust, efficient and transparent** (confirmed by the Independent Observer)

❖ **Unanimous positive feedback on**
- *Narrative evaluation* (vs. strengths/weakness bulletpoints).
- *Scoring benchmark*
- *Revamped evaluation checklist*
- *New Quality Check process*
- *Briefing* (e-learning, manual, quiz, massive Q&A sessions)
- *Central panel review week in Brussels*: better interactions and discussions, calibration

DN 2024 call Evaluation feedback

❖ **Declining trend of retained DN-JD and DN-ID** proposals (10.7% of main-list) compared to DN 2023 and 2022 (11,7% and 17.4% respectively)

❖ **Lack of interest for IDs/JDs?**
- More complex set-up for IDs, less flexibility compared to standard DNs (in spite of 2022 incentive/simplification)
- Joint/double/multiple PhD: difficult and long process

  ➢ **More promotion needed for DN 2025 call**

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

The proposal's main goal, targeting the energy metabolism system of the mycobacteria to develop drugs to treat tuberculosis, is of **high quality** and **well-suited for a doctoral training program**. The **research and innovation objectives** are of high **quality, verifiable, measurable, and achievable** within the project's timeframe and available resources. The proposed work is **feasible and ambitious**, addressing clear needs concerning multi-drug resistance. **Advancements beyond the state of the art are convincingly outlined** by the synthesis of energy-disrupting molecules that are expected to strongly coact with bactericidal agents. The **individual projects of the doctoral** candidates are well **integrated into the overall research program**, and their contributions are convincingly explained.

The **project** is **clear** and very well **justified in terms of consolidating technological competences** in a strategic area with a high geopolitical impact. The project's relevance is convincing and **overall its objectives are well-defined**. The project objectives are measurable, verifiable, and convincingly achievable. The state-of-the art is well described, and the project is intelligently positioned in relation to existing European collaborative projects. While not revolutionary overall, the **proposed work is ambitious and beyond the state-of-the-art**, proposing **some quite cutting-edge innovations.** The proposal convincingly demonstrates how individual doctoral candidate projects will be integrated into the broader research programme and how each project contributes to the overall training objectives.

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

The objectives outlined in the proposal are both clear and ambitious, focusing on the development of a methodology for assessing metacontrol, with the intention of validating this methodology across two distinct models: XXXXXXXXXXX and YYYYYYYYY. However, there is an absence of a unified approach that encompasses all objectives, which represents a shortcoming.

Furthermore, the proposal exhibits an imbalance in the volume of research dedicated to XXXXXXX compared to YYYYYYYY, which constitutes another shortcoming.

Additionally, it is not entirely clear that the proposal will go beyond the state of the art. This is a shortcoming.

The proposal does provide a credible explanation of how individual projects will be integrated into the overarching research programme and how they will contribute to it. However, in certain instances, it remains unclear how the results of individual projects will address specific implications, such as the role of XXXXX in clinical practice. This represents a minor shortcoming.

Excellence. 1.2 Soundness of the proposed methodology

The methodology is both sound and clear, offering **well-structured innovative technological and methodological approaches** aligned with the proposed objectives. The methodology includes detailed descriptions of experimental designs, data collection methods, and analytical techniques, ensuring that the network is well-equipped to deliver on its goals. The proposal clearly demonstrates **how expertise and methods from various disciplines will be integrated to pursue its objectives**. The interdisciplinary approach is clearly justified and well-supported by the context of the research, combining a comprehensive range of topics relevant to the development of novel therapeutic treatments for tuberculosis with improved properties. The **gender dimension and other diversity aspects within the research and innovation content are very well addressed**. The scientific aims of the proposal specifically address health risk factors which are particular for women and the training includes specific topics of gender balance. The proposal provides clear information on the **implementation of open science practices** as an integral part of the methodology. It is clearly specified **how data will be organized, stored, and shared, ensuring that it is accessible to relevant stakeholders** while maintaining compliance with ethical and legal standards. The outline of the data management plan is consistent with the **FAIR principles**. The **AI to be developed**/used does not have the potential to cause unacceptable harm to the physical and mental integrity of humans or have a significant impact on people's lives.

Excellence. 1.2 Soundness of the proposed methodology

The scientific methodology presents several shortcomings.

Specifically, the EEG methodology lacks clarity regarding the mathematical and methodological integration between the various data analysis approaches.

Additionally, there is an inconsistency in how metacontrol is defined within the theoretical framework and how it is evaluated across different experiments involving XXXX and YYYY. Overall, these issues highlight shortcomings in both the theoretical framing of metacontrol and its measurement, as well as in the integration of diverse data analysis approaches, which represent a significant weakness of the proposal.

The interdisciplinary nature of the proposal is adequately detailed, illustrating how methods from various fields will be leveraged to achieve the project's objectives.

The consideration of the gender dimension is appropriately addressed. However, further clarification on how other diversity factors will be integrated into the data analysis process lacks sufficient detail. This is a minor shortcoming. Open science practices are adequately presented. However, the adherence to the FAIR principles is insufficiently detailed, particularly concerning reproducibility. This is also a minor shortcoming.

Excellence. 1.3 Quality and credibility of the training programme

The proposed training program is credibly outlined, comprehensive, well-structured, and of high quality, relying on a **combination of local training, many international secondments**, and **network events** to promote interdisciplinary knowledge and technical skills. The career of the Doctoral Candidates (DCs) will be further consolidated by **exposure to training on transferable skills like scientific writing, project management, IP, and innovation**, that are in demand in the industrial life sciences sector. The training program correctly includes **industrial secondments** which will promote intersectoral mobility of the doctoral candidates.

The proposal presents an overall plan for training based on core elements and electives to provide flexibility and address the diverse needs of the fellows. However, the complementarity between the network-wide training activities with locally-offered programs is not convincingly explained and the availability of the local activities to the doctoral candidates is not sufficiently clearly presented.

Excellence. 1.4 Quality of the supervision

Both **academic and non-academic supervisors have very good track** records in their relevant research field as well as **extensive experience in training and mentoring graduate students**. The **supervision plan** is very well articulated and the **co-supervision scheme** for each DC is well structured, with **one supervisor** at the host institution with a research trajectory directly linked to the scientific project and the **other bringing relevant and complementary scientific and transversal expertise**.

Both academic and non-academic supervisors are highly skilled and have the proper expertise and excellent track record to provide a good quality supervision with clearly defined roles. However, the supervision plan lacks more concrete actions to monitor DC's development and progress. This is considered a minor shortcoming.

Strengths - Excellence

- **Black font is related to the scientific quality**

- **Blue font is related to the methodology soundness**

- **Green font is related to the training quality**

- **Red font is related to the supervision quality**
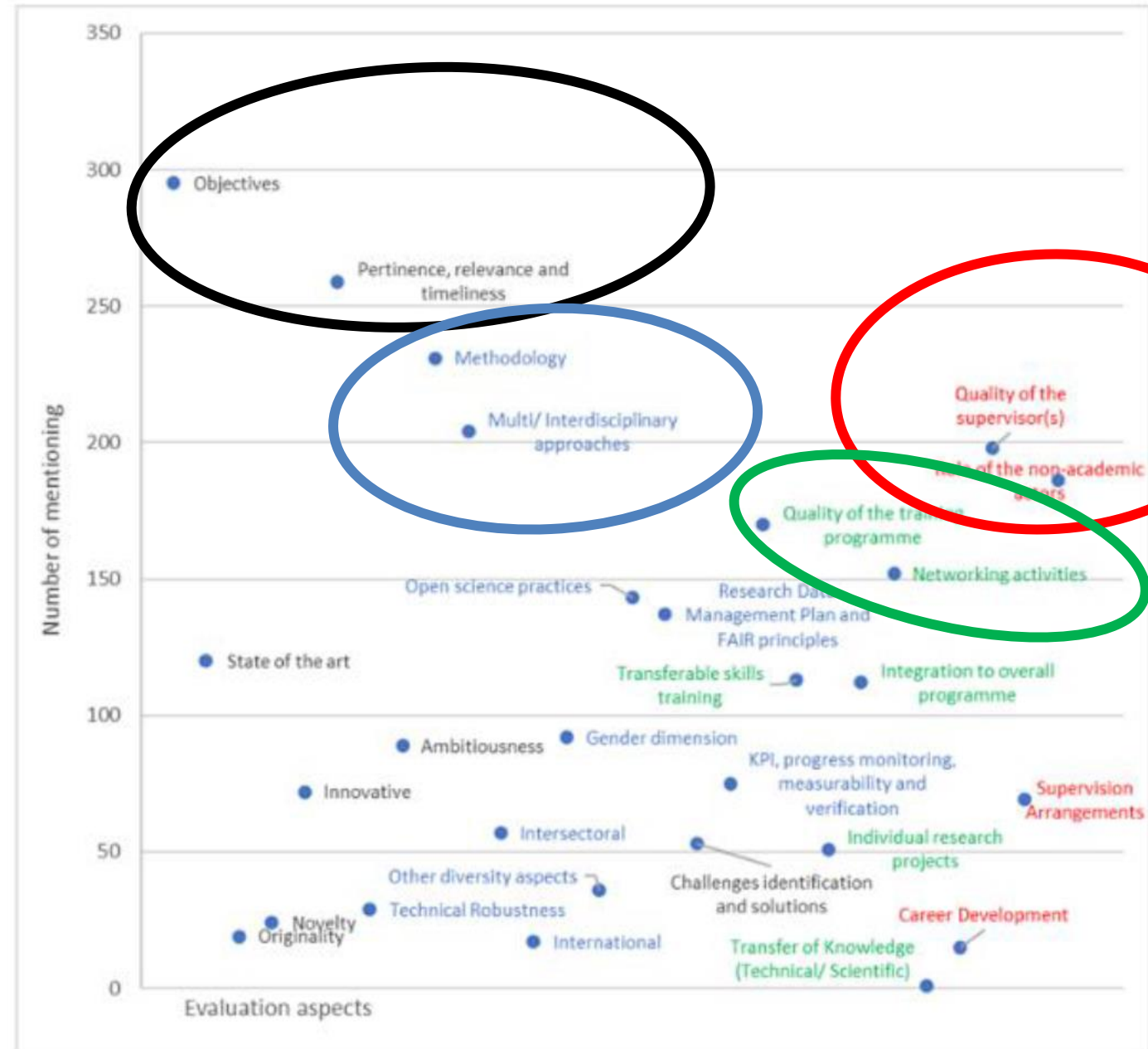
Weaknesses - Excellence

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- **Blue font is related to the methodology soundness**

- **Green font is related to the training quality**

- **Red font is related to the supervision quality**
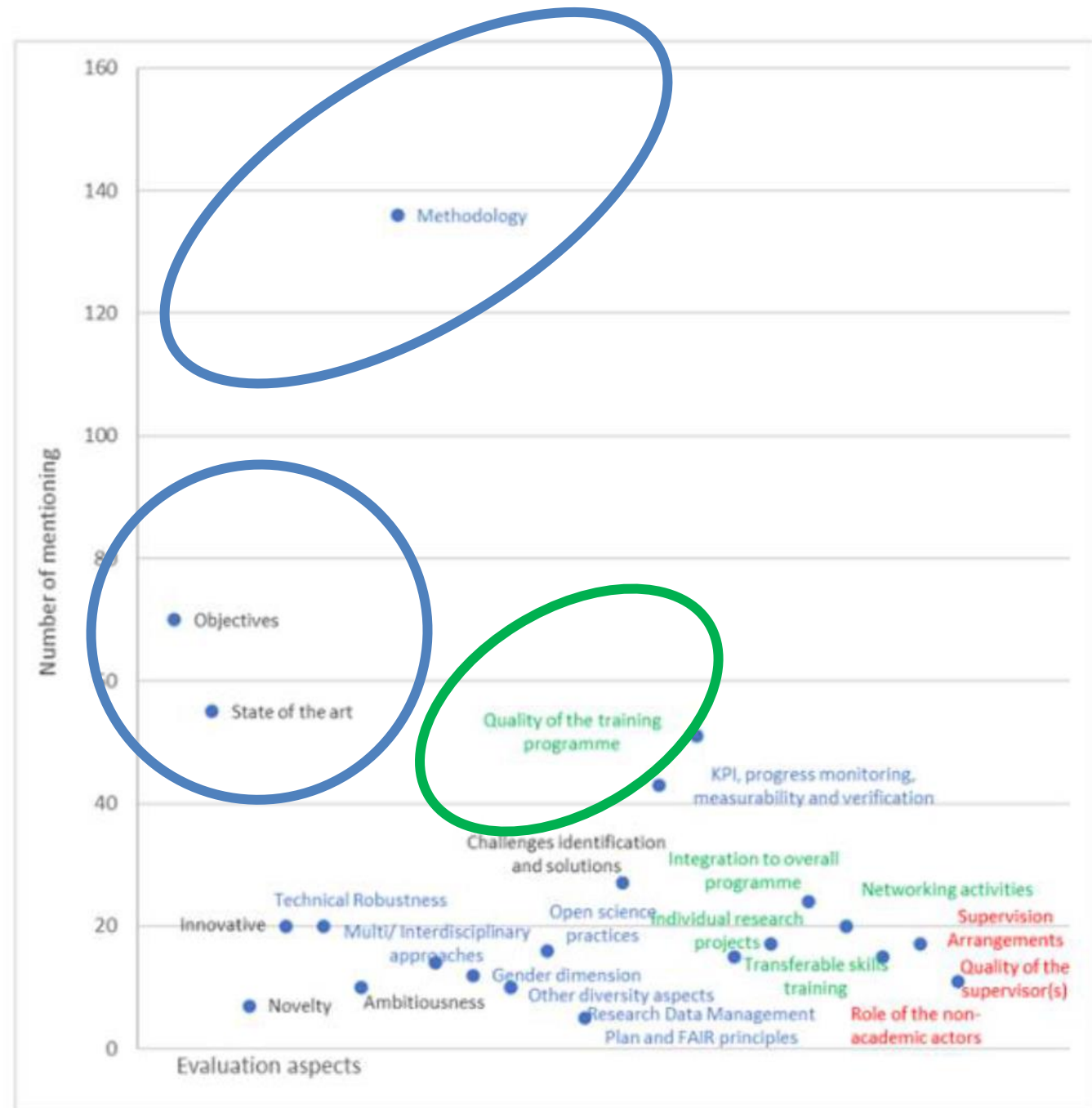
Impact. 2.1 Contribution to structuring doctoral training at the European level and to strengthening European innovation capacity. a) meaningful contribution of the non-academic sector to the doctoral training, as appropriate to the implementation mode and research field b) developing sustainable elements of doctoral programmes.

There is a sound contribution of the non-academic partners to the proposal with an effective integration in the proposed scientific and training activities. The proposal outlines **specific contributions from non-academic partners**, including **mentorship, training activities**, and **hosting secondments**, which significantly enrich the overall training experience for doctoral candidates. The impact of the **secondments and potential non-academic supervision is realistically** foreseen and very well outlined in the proposal. By **fostering partnerships and establishing frameworks for continuous collaboration**, the project ensures that the **impact of the training and research activities** will endure, **shaping the doctoral training landscape** in Europe. Moreover, the plans to uphold elements of the doctoral program, such as **lasting collaboration, secondment opportunities, joint publications, and grant applications as a consortium are of the highest quality.**

The contribution of the non-academic sector to the research and training activities is not well-articulated or sufficiently credible. The training activities rely heavily on one non-academic partner (XX). This same partner will also serve a bridge for the DC interaction with the private sector, whose involvement remains minimal. In addition, the associated clinical partners will provide a limited perspective, focusing solely on one facet of (local) training activities. This is a shortcoming.

The sustainability of the doctoral training program is not entirely convincing. The proposal mentions sustainable research after the DN completion, such as through resource development and long-term collaborations, but remains vague on how the training modules developed during the project will be integrated into the local training programs of the host institutions for future PhD students. This is a minor shortcoming.

Impact. 2.2. Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of researchers and contribution to their skills development

The proposed research and training program will provide Doctoral Candidates with unique **skill sets and advanced technical expertise** in medicinal chemistry. The broad networking opportunities achieved through the planned **interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral secondments** will effectively implement the DCs' social and scientific contact network in Europe in both the public and private sectors. By combining scientific excellence with practical applications, the proposal will **foster internationally competitive researchers**, enhancing their **long-term career prospects and employability in academia or the pharmaceutical and biotech industries**.

The proposed research activities, collaborations, mobility and foreseen publications will consolidate DC's research profile and CV. The offered interdisciplinary training and international collaboration will enhance DC career perspectives and employability in academia. However, the impact of the proposal on their potential career in the private sector is not well addressed and lacks sufficient detail (minor shortcoming).

Impact. 2.3 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 dissemination, communication, and exploitation plan is high quality and comprehensive. The proposed dissemination activities for the scientific audience are very good. They correctly include **peer-reviewed open-access publications and presentations at scientific conferences/ workshops**. Also, the measures employed for communicating the results to the **general public** are convincingly presented. **Multiple relevant target audiences** are identified stakeholders, including the scientific community, industry partners, policymakers, and the general public. However, communication activities targeting the industry are not sufficiently elaborated, despite the obvious industrial relevance of the research topic, and -0.2 also the indicators and metrics to evaluate the impact of dissemination and communication activities are not adequately envisioned. This is a shortcoming. The measures envisioned to exploit the project's results are very good and **exploitation procedures have been very well-addressed**.

The plan for dissemination to the scientific and communication activities lack sufficient detail regarding the type of events, target participants, and frequency. Additionally, they do not clearly define specific objectives or precise indicators and fail to effectively target patient communities that could benefit from the project (shortcoming).

The exploitation of results and management of intellectual property rights lacks sufficient detail to be fully credible (strategy for identifying and managing exploitable research results, potential pharmaceutical company to be approached). This is a shortcoming.

Excellence. 2.4 The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts (project's pathways towards impact)

The expected **scientific, technological, and economic impacts** are outstanding and highly relevant, aligning with **global health priorities**. The potential to provide **short-term significant scientific advancements** in medicinal chemistry, microbiology, biology, molecular/structural biology, and pharmaceutical technology is very high. Moreover, it is expected **to contribute to economic growth by developing new technologies, processes, or products**, enhancing the **competitiveness** of the pharmaceutical industries involved, and promoting EU innovation. The research topic addresses unmet medical needs, therefore, the **societal impact** is also clearly justified.

The magnitude and importance of the proposal's contribution to cancer biology and therapy is not sufficiently discussed. For example, expected scientific advances (e.g. new concepts in cancer signaling, therapeutic targets and biomarkers) are not clearly outlined.

The societal impact is also not well considered, notably regarding the current clinical management of targeted cancer patients. Finally, the economic impact is not sufficiently assessed to be credible (e.g. type of patents, target drug or spin-off company expected from the proposal). collectively, these are shortcomings.

Strengths - Impact

- **Black font is related to structuring doctoral training at the European level and strengthening European innovation capacity**
- **Green font is related to the researcher's career perspectives and employability**
- **Blue font is related to advancement of scientific fields**
- **Red font is related to dissemination/ communication activities**
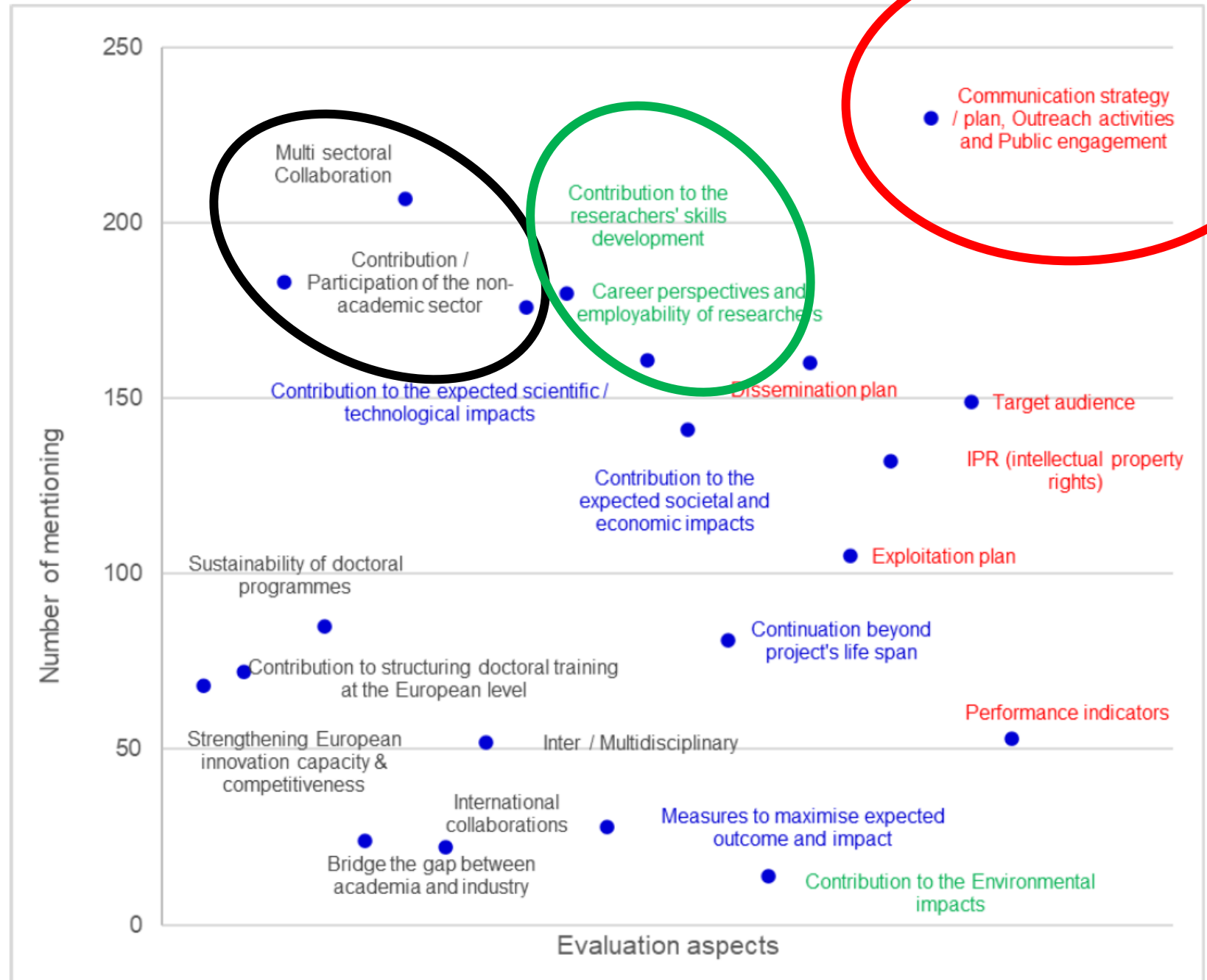
Weaknesses - Impact

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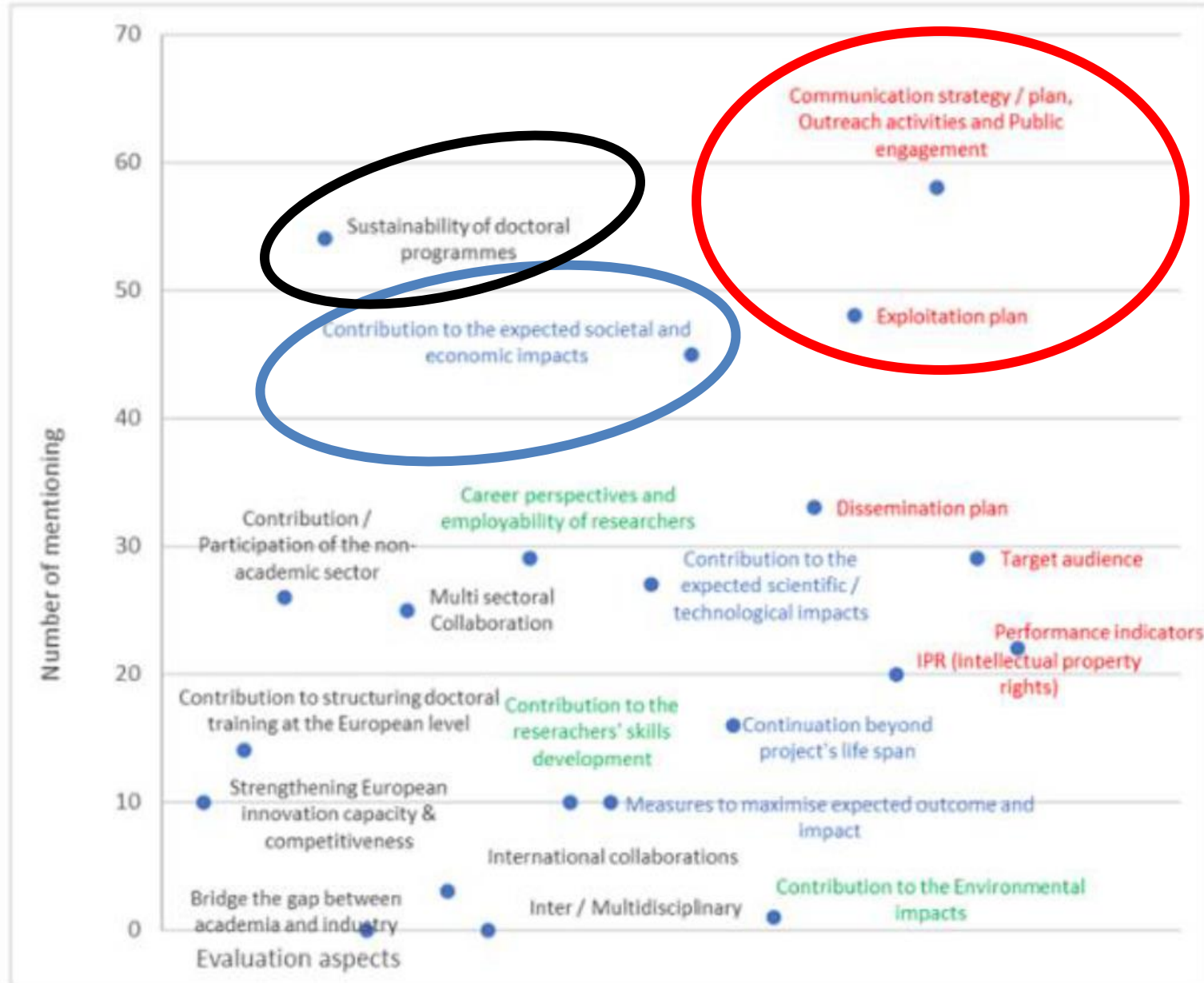
Implementation. 3.1 Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages

The work plan is of high quality and effective, demonstrating **coherence with the objectives and the methodology**. It includes meaningful, **timely,** and correctly defined **deliverables and milestones**, ensuring that the proposal stays on track and achieves its goals. A clear and relevant timeline is adequately summarised in a **Gantt chart**. The main **risks**, including **scientific misconduct**, are very well identified and come with meaningful mitigation measures.

The quality of the work plan is exceptional and **aligns** seamlessly with the **proposal's objectives and methodology**. The **work packages and tasks** are effectively organised and appropriately **linked to the research of the DCs**. The timetable is consistent with the research flow. **Milestones and deliverables are thoughtfully incorporated**, being relevant, consistent, and aligned with the work plan. **Potential risks** are clearly identified, covering **technical, scientific, management, and scientific misconduct risks**, each accompanied by a **severity** scale. A practical **risk-mitigation strategy** is proposed for each identified risk.

The workplan is well-designed, with clearly defined work packages. However, a shortcoming on a key component of implementation is that each scientific work package includes only one deliverable and one milestone, making it hard to monitor the effectiveness of the work plan. In addition, the efforts assigned to work packages by the various individual DCs are not sufficiently clear, which is also a shortcoming.

The proposal includes a relevant risk analysis on administrative and methodological risks with good contingency measures. However, the managerial risks related to scientific misconduct, researcher resignation, or conflicts between a DC and their supervisors are not adequately addressed. This a shortcoming.

Implementation. 2.2. Quality, capacity and role of each participant, including hosting arrangements and extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise

The participating institutions benefit from an **appropriate infrastructure** to carry out their tasks, and offer an **appropriate environment for supervision and training**. The participants **complement each other very well**, and the proposal effectively exploits the complementarity of the different participating organisations. Additionally, the **associated partners actively contribute** to the **research and training activities**.

The consortium is made up of impressive **academic and non-academic partners** who are **European leaders** in the fields of space and communications. The **industrial partners' laboratories** have been carefully selected to avoid duplication and to **cover all the research aspects of the programme**. The partners' infrastructures are well detailed and clearly add value to the project. The **consortium composition is well-balanced**, bringing together the necessary expertise to effectively implement the project, achieve the proposed objectives and the researchers' tasks. The commitment of the **associate partners** to the **research and training activities** is clearly outlined in the proposal through their **participation in the Supervisory Board**, **hosting secondments** and **industrial supervision.**

The description of the specialized infrastructure and expertise that is provided by the non-academic partners lacks detail, which is a minor shortcoming.
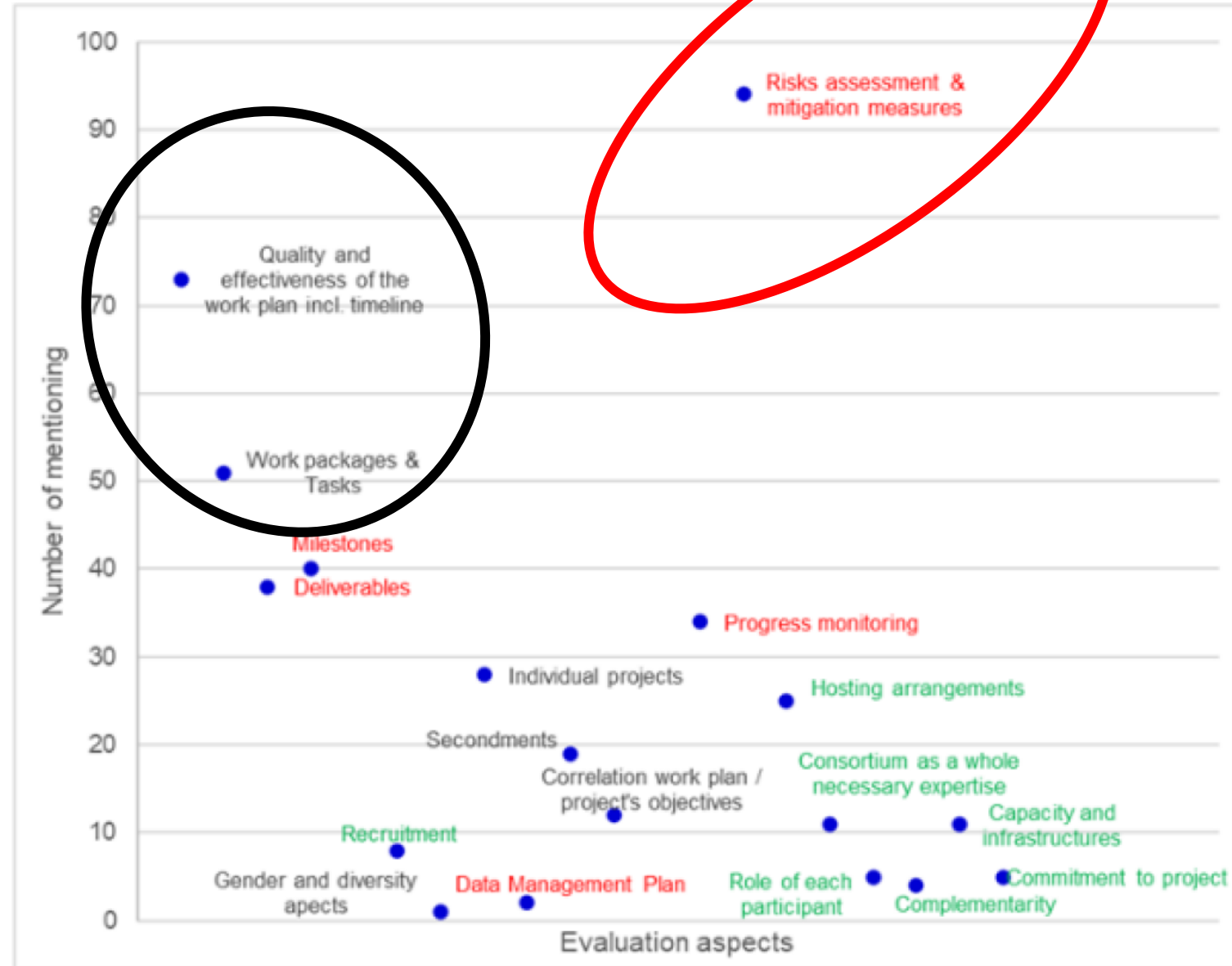
Strengths - Implementation

- **Black font is related to the project design**

- **Red font is related to monitoring and mitigation plan**

- **Green font is related to host suitability**

Weaknesses - Implementation

Thank you

msca@fecyt.es