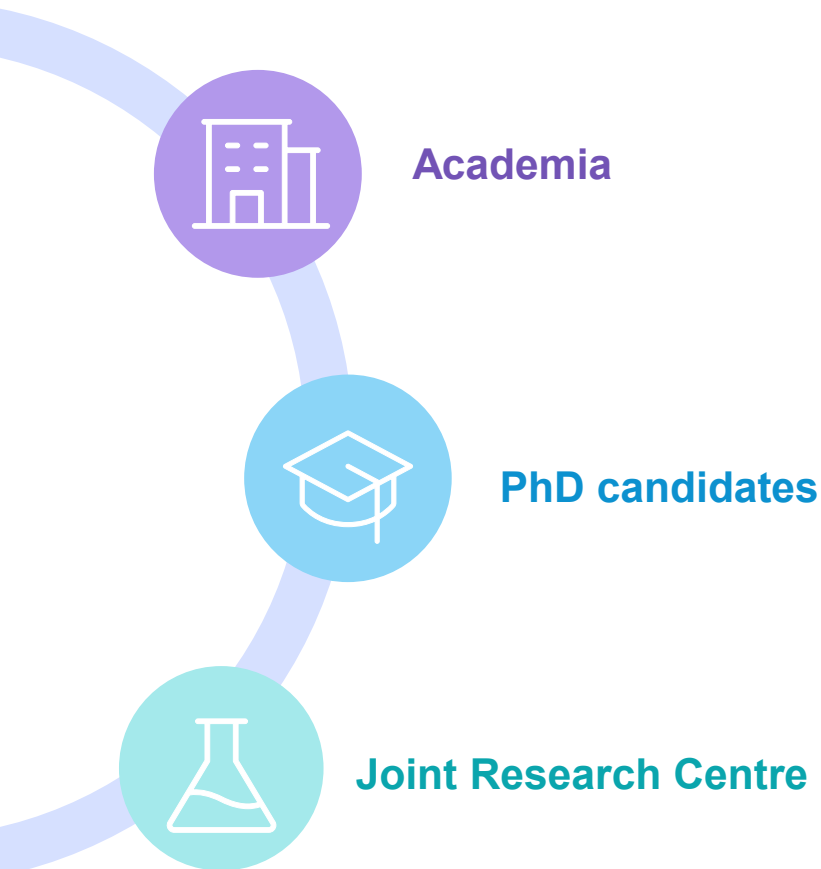


2026 Collaborative Doctoral Partnerships Info Session

Joint Research Centre

Head of Unit Centre for Advanced Studies

Win-win-win collaboration



“

*The CDP programme aims strengthen the **collaboration** between the JRC and its academic partners, and to train a new generation of doctoral graduates on the **science-policy** interface.*

Joint activities such
as scientific seminars,
publications and
teaching

Dual supervision,
both from the
university and the
JRC

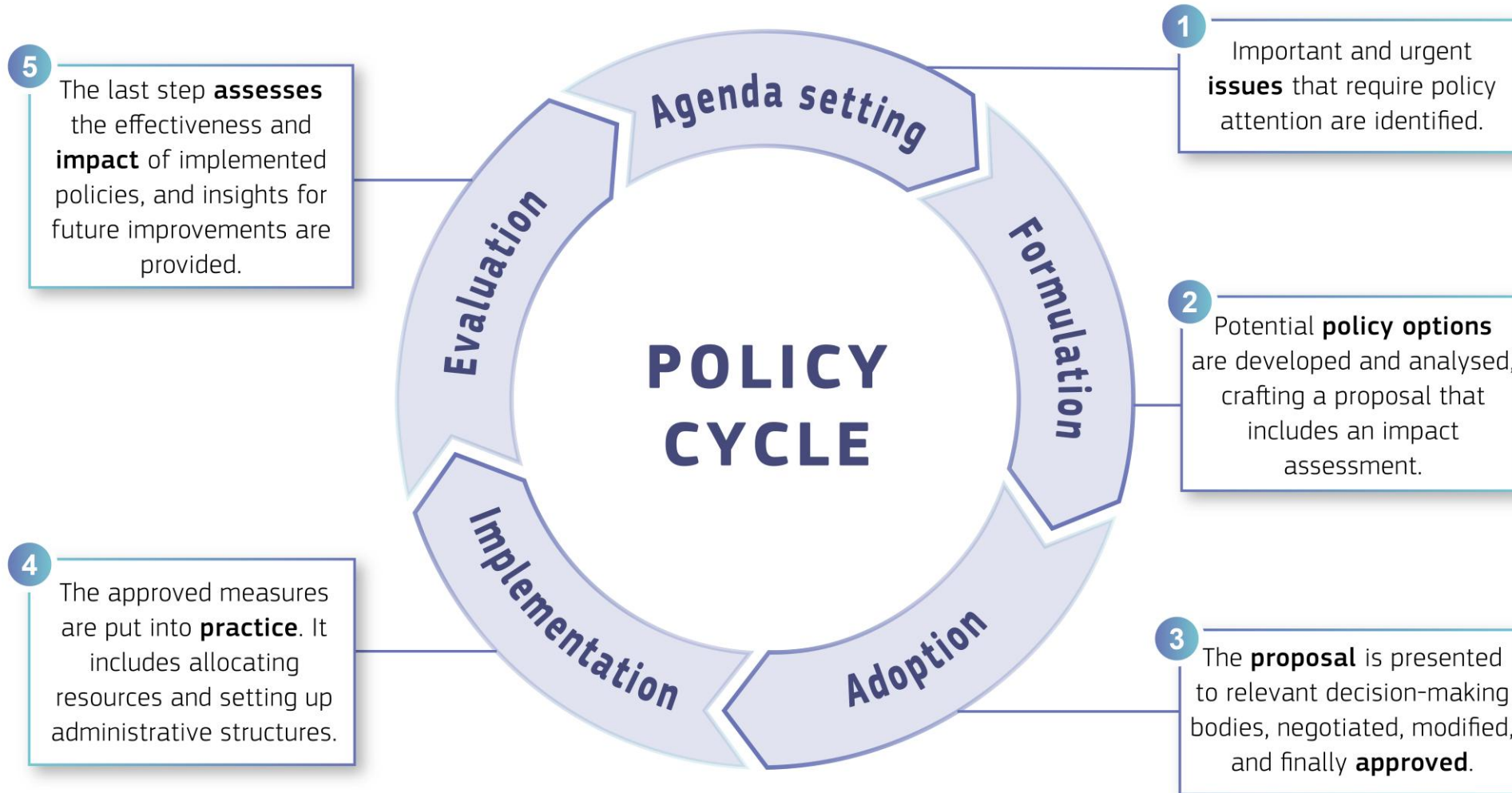
PhD project on
the **science-policy**
interface and multi-
disciplinary
research

Split time between
the JRC and the
University

Access to the
CDP network for
PhD researchers
and supervisors

Intellectual property
is owned by the
Partner Institution

Doctoral research in the EU policy cycle



Claudio Costanzo

Economist

Vrije Universiteit Brussel & JRC Brussels (BE)

“*The ‘science for policy’ approach makes you a more **complete scientist**, who can research but also talk with policymakers*”



Nevena Todorovic

Doctor of Medicine

University of Florence & JRC Ispra (IT)

“ Working at the JRC
makes my research
more **visible**, and as
a consequence,
more **impactful** ”



CDP History

○ 2016 First CDP Call for Expressions of Interest

20 Higher educations institutions

20 CDP graduates

○ 2020 Second CDP Call for Expressions of Interest

21 Higher educations institutions

53 CDP graduates

○ 2025 Third CDP Call for Expressions of Interest

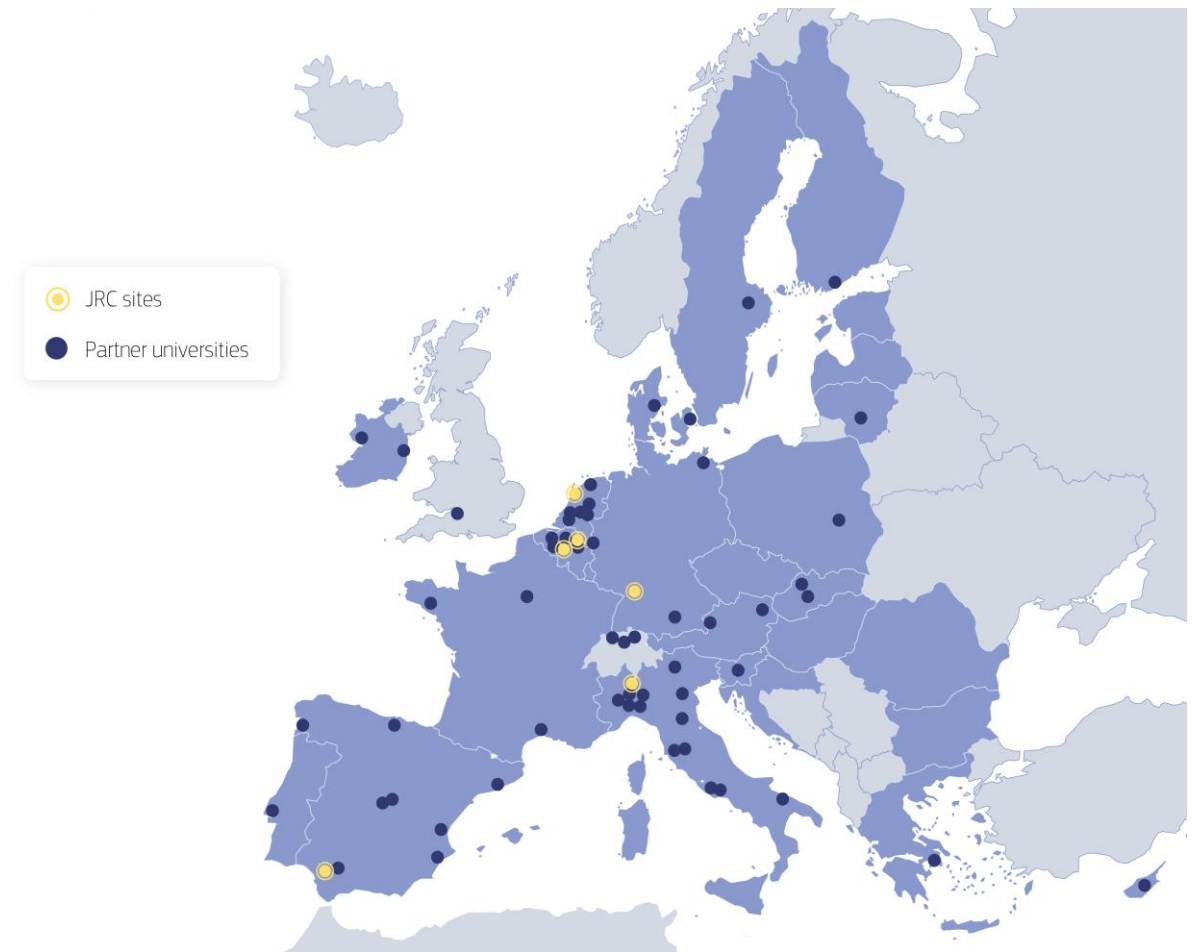
22 Higher educations institutions

24 Future CDP graduates

○ 2026 fourth Call for Expressions of Interest

8 Higher education institutions

24 Future CDP graduates



CDP Partnerships with HEIs across Europe

Scope of the call

Successful applicants will have the opportunity **to establish a scientific collaboration with the JRC at an institutional level**. This collaboration will support the **development of PhD projects of common interest**, which will be jointly designed, hosted, and supervised.

- **No direct transfer of funds** between Partner Institutions and the JRC
- JRC covers **employment costs** of the doctoral student while at the JRC
- Doctoral student will spend 12 to 24 months at one of the JRC sites in **Ispra, Petten, Geel, Karlsruhe, Brussels** or **Seville** and the remaining time at the Partner Institution
- Doctoral students become part of the **CDP community**

From Call to PhD project

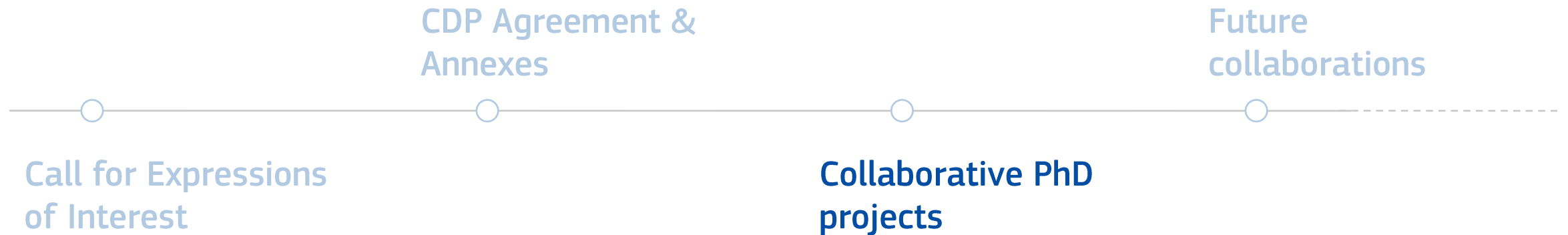


From Call to PhD project



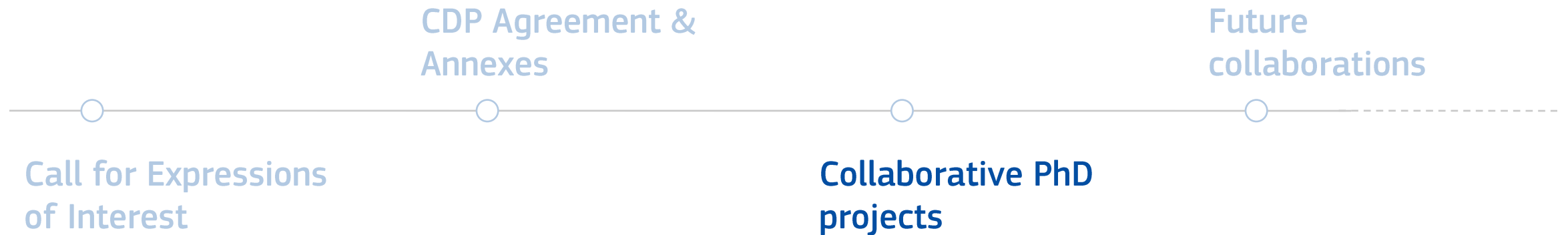
- Set **template** CDP Agreements are signed for **five years**
- **Voluntary agreement** includes IP, confidentiality and liability arrangements
- PhD projects are elaborated by supervisors from Partner Institutions and the JRC in **technical Annex**
- HR Annex establishes joint recruitment practice
- Data protection

From Call to PhD project



- **Shared recruitment** process initiated by the Partner Institution
- Two **separate employment contracts**
- JRC covers **employment cost** of PhD candidate while at the JRC, under a **Grantholder contract**
- Regular supervisor meetings online, occasional supervisor meetings in person

From Call to PhD project

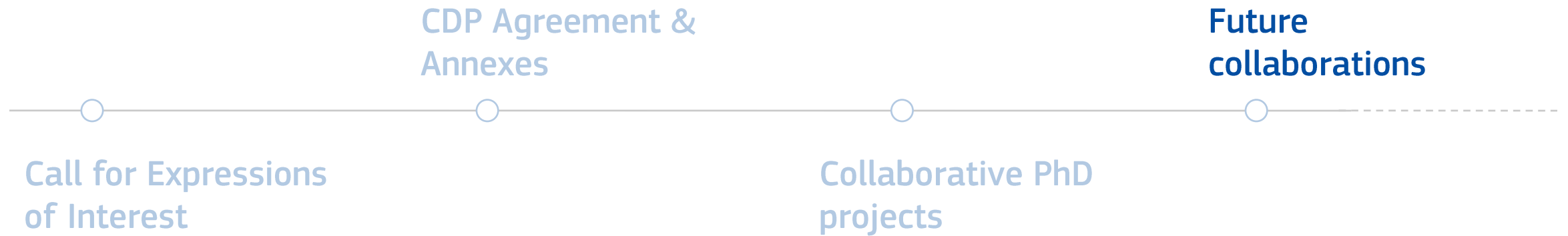


Eligibility of PhD fellows at JRC

Candidates must have the **nationality of a Member State** of the EU or a **country associated** to the EU Research Framework Programme in force, or have been **resident** in an EU Member State for at least five consecutive years.

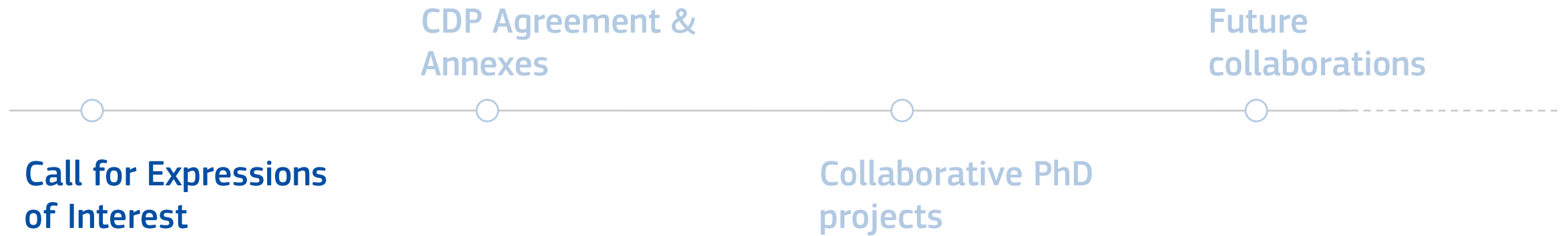
Candidates who are already enrolled in a doctoral study programme at the Partner Institution can be considered eligible, provided that they have been enrolled for less than 12 months by the application deadline indicated in the Doctoral Vacancy.

From Call to PhD project



- JRC organises joint scientific seminars
- Publications
- Teaching opportunities

From Call to PhD project



We are looking to establish **8 new Doctoral Partnerships** in 2026

- June 2026: publication of the call
- **25 September 2026, 23.59 (CEST):** deadline for applications
- December 2026: selection results
- September 2027: start of PhD projects

Eligibility criteria

Partner institutions include higher education institutions and research organisations. They should:

- Originate from an **EU Member State** or **country associated to the EU Research Framework Programme** in force. In the case of nuclear collaboration topics, the partner institution should originate from a country associated to the Euratom Research and Training Programme;
- Have the necessary administrative **autonomy to sign agreements** with external partners;
- Be able to **host and train PhD candidates**; and
- Be accredited to **award doctoral degrees**. Partner Institutions that are not accredited to award doctoral degrees may still apply provided that they have an **agreement** with a Partner Institution that is accredited to award doctoral degrees and fulfils all other criteria. In case their application is successful, the JRC will sign the CDP Agreement with both Partner Institutions.

Selection criteria

The JRC will assess all eligible proposals according to the following selection criteria:

- **Research (50 points)**, assessing the quality and relevance of the applicant's expertise and research practice.
- **Collaboration (30 points)**, assessing the applicant's experience in collaborative research projects and policy-oriented research.
- **Organisation (20 points)**, assessing the applicant's capacity and infrastructure for hosting doctoral fellows.

The application form to be filled out contains questions that are organised around each of these selection criteria.

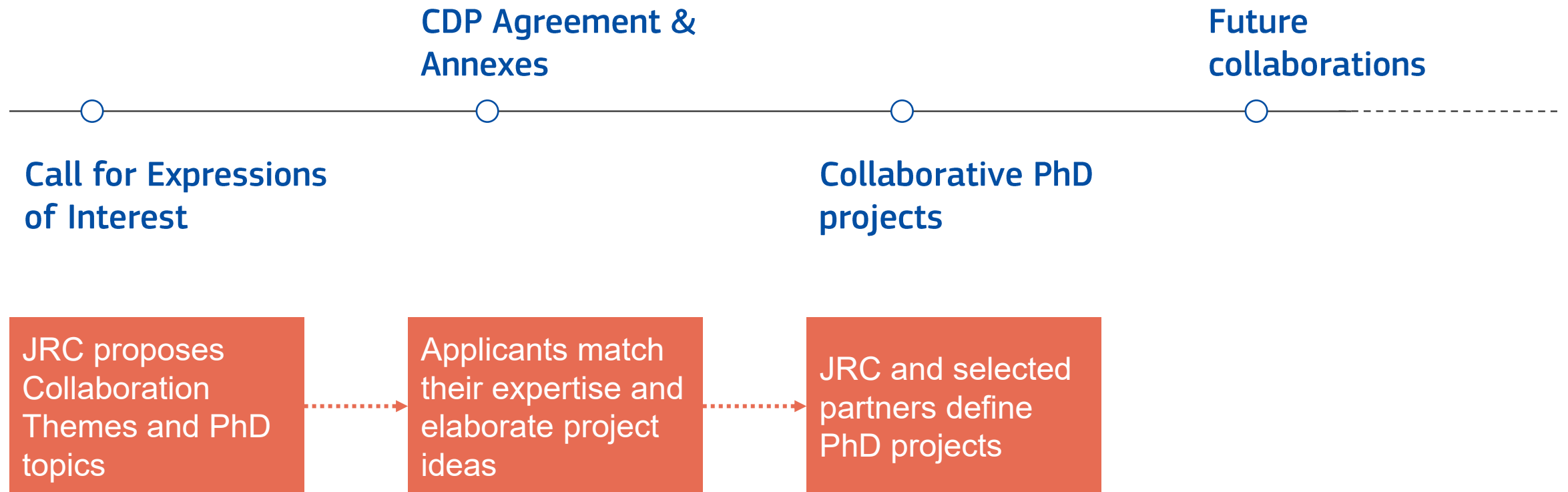
We strongly encourage researchers from different groups, faculties, and schools within the same institution to submit a joint proposal.

8 Collaboration Themes



	JRC Directorate	Fellow Positions
Autonomous discovery in economic modelling	B, D	4
Leverging AI in energy and mobility systems	C	3
AI-driven environmental modelling and monitoring	D	2
Resilience and security in a changing geopolitical landscape	E	3
Innovation in health and food technologies	F	3
Data-driven and AI enabled approches for nuclear science and technology	G	3
Rethinking policy making in the age of AI	S	3
Complex AI systems' evaluation	T	3

From Call to PhD project



How to apply

- Submit **complete application forms** through the online portal
- Strive for **one application per Collaboration Theme** per Partner Institution
- Multiple applications from the same Partner Institution for the same Collaboration Theme are discouraged but not prohibited
- Multiple applications from the same Partner Institution for different Collaboration Themes are **assessed independently** from one another

How to apply

Application information

Introduction

What to apply for

Who can apply

Collaboration Themes

Selection criteria

When to apply

Info session

Related documents

Related documents

GENERAL PUBLICATIONS | 10 June 2026

[2026 CDP Call for Expressions of Interest](#)

GENERAL PUBLICATIONS | 10 June 2026

[CDP 2026 - Collaboration Theme 26.B](#)

GENERAL PUBLICATIONS | 10 June 2026

[CDP 2026 - Collaboration Theme 26.C](#)

GENERAL PUBLICATIONS | 10 June 2026

[CDP 2026 - Collaboration Theme 26.D](#)

..europa.eu/.../41fec978-31e4-413f-9593-4d8b83c0d771 en?file...

All **relevant documents** can be found at the bottom of the web page:

- Call announcement
- Collaboration Theme descriptions
- Template CDP agreement and annexes

How to apply

2. Collaboration Theme

* Indicate which Collaboration Theme your proposal is for: ?

Only one Collaboration Topic may be chosen. If the Applicant wishes to choose more than one Collaboration Topic, they must select the most relevant one.

- ☒ 26.B Autonomous discovery for integrated EU policy modelling
- ☐ 26.C Leveraging AI in energy and mobility systems
- ☐ 26.D Leveraging AI and machine learning to enhance ecosystem resilience
- ☐ 26.E AI-enabled resilience and security of the built environment and critical infrastructure
- ☐ 26.F Leveraging AI and data standards to advance disease prevention, detection, and
- ☐ 26.G Data-Driven and AI-Enabled Approaches for Nuclear Science and Technology
- ☐ 26.S Leveraging AI to Improve Policy Design and Evaluation
- ☐ 26.T Complex AI systems' evaluation

26.B Autonomous discovery for integrated EU policy modelling

- Select the relevant Collaboration Theme
- Complete the relevant questionnaire that appears upon selecting the theme

How to apply

whose strength lies in transparent, theory-grounded representations of the systems they describe. Recent advances in agentic artificial intelligence such as systems that autonomously formulate hypotheses, assemble relevant data, design and run computational experiments, and synthesise evidence open the prospect of augmenting such structural models.

The collaboration aims to develop, stress-test and document agentic methods that develop and operate around structural policy models: orchestrating multi-model policy experiments, surfacing empirical regularities of policy interest from EU microdata, discovering linkages across models that today operate largely in isolation, and autonomously designing and exploring policy scenarios across the relevant policy space.

Across all PhD projects, the methodological priority is to preserve the economic interpretability that gives structural models their policy legitimacy, while addressing the conditions — reproducibility, auditability, validation, trust — under which AI-assisted policy modelling is fit for the EU policy cycle. The collaboration would draw on JRC expertise in structural policy modelling, applied economics, and machine learning, and engage with the rapidly evolving frontier of agentic scientific discovery.

Researcher profiles: quantitative economics, machine learning, agentic systems, fiscal and distributional analysis, regional and spatial economics, environmental and resource economics, agricultural and land-use economics

The JRC is looking to partner with one or more research groups from the same partner institution to realise four PhD projects under this Collaboration Theme. Below is a short description of possible PhD topics. Each applicant shall elaborate their proposal based on the proposed Collaboration Theme and PhD topics. The eventual detailed elaboration of the PhD projects will be developed by the selected applicants and the relevant JRC points of contact.

PhD topic 26B01

Autonomous experiment design and execution across structural policy models

How many **PhD projects** the JRC can host, on which topics and how to fill in the application form is **detailed separately** for each Collaboration Theme in the thematic documents.

Find all information online



2026 CDP Call website

- Call documents
- Online application form
- Template agreements

JRC-CDP@ec.Europa.eu