Frequently Asked Questions

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

Participation of Third Countries and International Organisations in the Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call is possible.

To be considered as a beneficiary, Third Countries (TC) are divided into two groups:

1) Those countries listed in the General Annex A of the Work Programme are eligible to receive funding provided that the minimum eligibility requirements of the consortium have been met.

2) For those TCs *not* listed in the above mentioned Annex A of the Work Programme and for International Organisations (IO), the funding of these organisations can be permitted in exceptional cases, if endorsed by the expert evaluators and <u>if one of the two</u> following conditions is met:

- the participation is deemed essential for carrying out the action;
- such funding is provided for under a bilateral scientific and technological agreement or any other arrangement between the European Union and the country in which the legal entity is established.

  Applicants wishing to include organisations from TC not listed in Annex A of the Work Programme or IO in their consortium should <u>focus on demonstrating that their participation is essential for carrying out the proposed project</u>. This will be assessed by the experts during the evaluation.

In this case the participation of TC and IO will be based on the judgment that the participation of the entity in the project, offers unique benefits to the consortium. These benefits may include, for example, outstanding/unique competence and expertise, access to unique research infrastructures, access to geographical environments, etc.

Can partner organisations in the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call be from the same country as the Coordinator?

Yes. Partner organisations can be from any country, any discipline and any sector.

Is there a recommended number of partner organisations in the MSCA Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call?

No, there is not a recommended number of partner organisations **in an ITN proposal**. The number of partners will depend on each individual research-training programme and on each

partner organisation's added value to the programme. Each partner organisation should therefore demonstrate a real and active role in the project.

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

Mono-site consortia are not allowed for the MSCA **Innovative Training Networks (ITN) call** under the Horizon 2020 rules. However, mono-site doctoral programmes can now be co-funded under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie COFUND action.

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

The definition is specific to the MSCA Work Programme.

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

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

The status of the entity is automatically determined by the information inserted in the beneficiary register by the participants and reflected in Part A of the proposal.

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

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

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

European Training Networks (ETN) may be composed of only research organisations and companies. However, almost all **Innovative Training Networks (ITN)** have universities among the beneficiaries and/or partner organisations so that PhD degrees can be awarded by these institutions. For European Industrial Doctorates (EID) with 2 beneficiaries, it is possible

to have as beneficiaries only research organisations and companies. However, an institution entitled to award a doctoral degree <u>must</u> be associated to the project as a partner organisation in order to award the doctoral degrees. For multi-site EIDs, it is expected that universities will participate as beneficiaries. For European Joint Doctorates (EJD), the above-mentioned set-up is not allowed. The participation of 3 beneficiaries which are academic institutions entitled to award doctoral degrees and located in 3 different Member States or Associated Countries is an eligibility criterion for the type of action.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Under the MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE actions in Horizon 2020, is it compulsory for the Early Stage Researchers enrolled in a PhD to defend their thesis within 3 years?

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

Where should we include a table of contents in Part B of the proposal?

In Document 1 of Part B of the proposal. It should not be longer than one page in length. Section 1 of Part B must start on page 5, and sections 1 to 3 must not exceed 30 pages in length. The expert evaluators will be strictly instructed to disregard any content above these pages limits.

Eligible Researchers

All researchers recruited in an ITN must be Early-Stage Researchers (ESRs)