OPEN CALL ANALYSIS

MSCA DOCTORAL NETWORKS 2026

EU-funded doctoral training networks: consortia that employ and train doctoral candidates (HORIZON-MSCA-2026-DN-01-01)

EUnita strategic translation

This call pays universities, research bodies and companies in at least three countries to run a doctoral programme together and to employ the doctoral candidates themselves. The EU pays fixed amounts for each person-month: a living allowance adjusted by country, a mobility allowance, and contributions for research, training and management. A network can claim at most 540 person-months, and each fellowship lasts three to 36 months. What decides the outcome is a score on Excellence (50%), Impact (30%) and implementation (20%), with at least 3 out of 5 on each criterion and at least 70% overall, ranked in one of eight scientific panels. In 2025, 141 of 1,616 proposals were funded. The deadline is 24 November 2026; the next round is planned for 2027.

MSCA DN ANALYSIS

Fit assessment | Sources | What it funds | Boundaries | Budget & competition | Eligibility | Money | Evaluation | Risks

Deadline: 24 November 2026, 17:00 Brussels time (18:00 in Romania)

Call budget: EUR 628.03 million (Work Programme and Portal; REA pages: EUR 593.03 million) | Limit: 540 person-months per network | REA expected about 130 projects (stated with the EUR 593.03 million figure) | Opened 28 May 2026

Prepared by

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Analysis date: 18 November 2026

*This analysis interprets the official call documentation for applicants. It is not legal advice. The official texts are the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2026-2027 part 2 (MSCA, Commission Decision C(2026) 6687/2 of 29 September 2026) and its General Annexes, the MSCA Doctoral Networks 2026 Guide for Applicants (Version 5.1, 1 July 2026), the application and evaluation forms and the Portal topic page, all read on 18 November 2026; where this analysis and an official text differ, the official text prevails. Labels used: **Confirmed** (stated in an official source), **EUnita interpretation** (our reading or recommendation), **Derived estimate** (our arithmetic on official figures).*

1. Decision summary: is this call for you?

MSCA Doctoral Networks 2026 funds consortia that run a doctoral programme together and employ the doctoral candidates. Three kinds of network share one call: standard Doctoral Networks, Industrial Doctorates and Joint Doctorates. The Work Programme sets EUR 628.03 million for the 2026 call (REA's pages say EUR 593.03 million). The deadline is 24 November 2026, 17:00 Brussels time. A network can claim at most 540 person-months, paid as fixed amounts per person-month. In 2025, 141 of 1,616 proposals were funded.

Item	Confirmed position	Source
Call	MSCA Doctoral Networks 2026, topic HORIZON-MSCA-2026-DN-01-01, call HORIZON-MSCA-2026-DN-01; one topic with three types of action (HORIZON-TMA-MSCA-DN, -DN-ID, -DN-JD)	WP p. 13-14; Portal data file
Programme and manager	Horizon Europe, Pillar I, Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), Work Programme 2026-2027; run by the European Research Executive Agency (REA), which also organises the evaluation	WP cover; REA call page; REA evaluation overview p. 1; Decision (EU) 2021/173 Art. 3
Instrument	Grant made of unit contributions per person-month (HORIZON Unit Grant, HORIZON-AG-UN); 100% reimbursement of the eligible units	Portal data file; WP p. 69; Presentation slide 38
Call budget	EUR 628.03 million (Work Programme and Portal). REA's call page and the Guide say EUR 593.03 million. The Work Programme adds a 2026 Choose Europe amount of EUR 70 million for Postdoctoral Fellowships and Doctoral Networks together (section 2)	WP p. 8, 12-13; Portal topic page; Guide p. 10; REA call page
Grant per project	No amount per project is published. The limit is 540 person-months per network, for all three modes	WP p. 13-14, p. 74; Guide p. 5
Number of projects	The Work Programme gives none. REA expected about 130 projects when it gave the EUR 593.03 million budget	WP p. 13; Info-day Q&A question 49, p. 17
Duration	Project up to 48 months (Joint Doctorates 60); fellowship 3 to 36 months (Joint Doctorates 3 to 48)	WP p. 74
Who applies	A consortium of at least three independent legal entities (beneficiaries) in three different EU Member States or Horizon Europe associated countries, at least one in an EU Member State. Associated partners may come from any country, except the excluded entities (section 8)	WP p. 72; Guide p. 9
Romania	Eligible as an EU Member State. The country correction coefficient for the living allowance is 72.6%	WP Table 1, p. 110
Procedure	Single-stage. Part A online; Part B as two PDF files (B1 at most 34 pages). Evaluated by at least three independent external experts, ranked in eight scientific panels	Portal topic page; Application form PDF p. 24; REA evaluation overview p. 1; WP p. 75-76
Dates	Opened 28 May 2026. Deadline 24 November 2026, 17:00:00 Brussels time. REA's planned timetable: applicants notified April 2027, grant agreements July 2027, first projects September 2027	WP p. 13; REA call page
Next round	HORIZON-MSCA-2027-DN-01-01: planned to open on 26 May 2027, planned deadline 23 November 2027, 17:00 Brussels time, EUR 645.99 million, subject to appropriations; the dates may move. Call documents for 2027: not published	WP p. 12, 17; Portal data file for the 2027 topic
Status on 18 Nov 2026	Open. The Portal shows the deadline as 24 November 2026; no change announced	Portal topic page, checked 18 November 2026

Good fit

- ✓ Universities and research institutes with a doctoral programme that want to join or lead a network of at least three countries
- ✓ Companies, public bodies and NGOs that can host doctoral candidates for part of their training, as beneficiaries or associated partners
- ✓ A consortium that already has a written proposal and needs only a last rule check before 24 November 2026
- ✓ An organisation asked shortly before the deadline of 24 November 2026 to join an existing proposal as an associated partner
- ✓ Networks that want industry-linked training (Industrial Doctorates) or joint degrees (Joint Doctorates)
- ✓ Groups that can describe training, supervision and career support in detail, in addition to the research

Not a fit

- ✗ Single organisations, or consortia with fewer than three independent beneficiaries in three countries
- ✗ Projects that employ researchers who already hold a doctorate (Postdoctoral Fellowships is a different action)
- ✗ Teams with no draft and no partners on 18 November 2026: the next round is the realistic target
- ✗ Consortia whose 2025 proposal scored below 80% and who would resubmit a similar proposal
- ✗ Organisations that want funding but will not recruit a doctoral candidate: they can only be associated partners and cannot claim costs
- ✗ Entities established in Russia, Belarus or the non-government-controlled territories of Ukraine, and Chinese universities linked to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology

EUnita verdict (interpretation)

EUnita interpretation: a strong instrument for universities and research institutes that already run doctoral programmes, and for companies and public bodies that want to co-train doctoral candidates. It is a large but very competitive call: about 8.7% of proposals were funded in 2025. For an organisation without a consortium and a written proposal on 18 November 2026, the realistic target is the next round, planned to open on 26 May 2027 and close on 23 November 2027.

Who can still use the deadline of 24 November 2026, and who should prepare for the next round

- Confirmed: the deadline is 24 November 2026, 17:00:00 Brussels time (18:00 in Romania). The Director-General may delay a deadline by up to two months; none is announced (WP p. 13; Portal topic page, 18 November 2026).
- EUnita interpretation: a consortium whose proposal is written can still use it. The work left is a rule check: three countries, the 40.0% rule on amounts, every beneficiary recruiting, at most 540 person-months, Part A equal to Part B, formats and file sizes, and the resubmission declaration.
- EUnita interpretation: an organisation asked to join as an associated partner can still be added. Associated partners need no letter of commitment; the coordinator enters them in Part A and describes their role in Parts B1 and B2 (Portal Q&A 90930). They cannot recruit or claim costs.
- EUnita interpretation: joining as a beneficiary shortly before the deadline changes the budget table, the 40.0% test and the text. It is realistic only if the coordinator can still rework all three before the deadline.
- Confirmed: the Work Programme plans the next round, HORIZON-MSCA-2027-DN-01-01, to open on 26 May 2027 and close on 23 November 2027, 17:00 Brussels time, with EUR 645.99 million, subject to appropriations. The opening may move by up to one month either way and the deadline may be delayed by up to two months (WP p. 12, 17). The Guide, forms and evaluation form for 2027: not published.
- EUnita interpretation: everyone without a written proposal and a consortium should use the months before 26 May 2027 to build one, and should not send an unfinished proposal before 24 November 2026.

2. Source verification and document status

All figures and rules in this analysis come from the official documents below, read on 18 November 2026. Where documents differ, the Work Programme and the Portal are the legal basis of the call; REA's pages say the legal instruments and the call text prevail. The differences found are listed in the box.

Document	Version / date printed	Used for
Portal topic page and data file, HORIZON-MSCA-2026-DN-01-01	Page printed 18 Nov 2026; data file dates stored as date-only (00:00 UTC)	Status, opening, deadline, budget overview, topic updates
Work Programme 2026-2027, part 2 MSCA	Annex II, Decision C(2026) 6687/2 of 29 September 2026; file dated 22 Oct 2026	Call table, eligibility, unit contributions, award criteria, country coefficients
Work Programme 2026-2027, General Annexes	Annex XV; file dated 29 Sep 2026	Admissibility, eligibility, countries, evaluation, payments
MSCA Doctoral Networks 2026 Guide for Applicants	Version 5.1, 1 July 2026	Rules in plain words, overview table, novelties for 2026
Application form (Part A example, Part B template)	Part B template Version 6.0, 4 April 2026	Page limits, structure, format
Evaluation form (HE MSCA)	V2.2, 17 December 2025	Criteria, weights, scoring
Unit Model Grant Agreement	V1.3, 15 December 2025	Payments, grant terms (model)
MSCA Financial Guide	Version 2.0, 1 September 2026	Grant management (background)
List of participating countries (Horizon Europe)	V4.2, 7 October 2026	Associated and other countries
REA info-day presentation and questions and answers	3 June 2026 presentation; answers file dated 6 Aug 2026	REA's statements on budget, projects, success rate
Portal Topic Q&As (57 answers)	Published 7 May to 9 Nov 2026	Details on partners, evaluation, format
REA call page and REA evaluation overview	Page read 18 Nov 2026; overview has no date printed	Post-deadline timetable, evaluation steps, review
CORDIS	Queried 18 Nov 2026	Number of funded projects per round

Where the official documents differ

- Budget: EUR 628.03 million in the Work Programme (p. 12-13) and on the Portal; EUR 593.03 million on REA's call page, in the Guide (p. 10) and in REA's info-day material. REA's page says the legal instruments and the call text prevail. This analysis follows the Work Programme and the Portal. Confirmed: the Work Programme (p. 8) and its General Introduction (p. 6) add a 2026 Choose Europe amount of EUR 70 million to the MSCA budget, to strengthen Postdoctoral Fellowships and Doctoral Networks together. Derived estimate: 628.03 minus 593.03 is 35.00 for Doctoral Networks; 434.05 (Work Programme p. 22, 24, 66) minus 399.05 (REA presentation, slide 6) is 35.00 for Postdoctoral Fellowships; together 70.00. No document says in words how the EUR 70 million is split between the two actions. EUnita interpretation: the figures fit, and REA's call page, Guide and slides may not yet include the amount.
- Unit contributions and 2026 conditions: the Work Programme file says its specific conditions apply to the 2027 calls and points to Commission Decision C(2025) 8493 of 11 December 2025 for the 2026 calls (footnote 65, p. 68). That decision is not linked from the call page. The 2026 topic table itself sends the reader to the specific conditions at the end of the Work Programme part (p. 14); the Guide (p. 12) and REA's info-day answers (question 50, p. 18) send the reader to Table 1 of the Work Programme for the coefficients; and REA's slide 39 gives the same unit amounts as the Work Programme except the long-term leave allowance. This analysis uses the Work Programme text and flags the point.
- Long-term leave allowance: EUR 4,960 x share covered (Work Programme p. 70) against EUR 4,720 (REA presentation of 3 June 2026, slide 39). The other unit contributions agree. EUnita interpretation: this difference may be linked to footnote 65 (the 2026 amount in the earlier decision against the 2027 amount in the Work Programme).
- Overall threshold: the Work Programme (p. 74) and Portal Q&A 92552 say 70% of the maximum total score, plus 3 out of 5 on each criterion. The general text of the evaluation form says the threshold applies to the sum of the three scores and weighting is only for ranking, and allows call-specific rules. REA's evaluation overview mentions a threshold of 10/15 for MSCA; 10/15 is 66.7%, not 70% (70% of 15 is 10.5). EUnita interpretation: that line may be a rounding or an older rule. This analysis follows the Work Programme and Q&A 92552.
- Secondments: Portal Q&A 90967 (21 May 2026) still says one third; Q&A 92555 (5 June 2026), the Guide and the Work Programme say one half for standard networks. This analysis follows the later texts.
- Associated countries: the General Annexes (Annex B, p. 11) list Canada, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea as associated to Horizon Europe; the List of Participating Countries (V4.2) shows Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea as associated to Pillar II only. Portal Q&A 92559 (filed under the RAISE topic, where the same answer is numbered 93031, and saying that RAISE follows the MSCA Doctoral Networks eligibility rules) says these four are not automatically eligible for funding and usually take part at their own cost. The documents read do not say whether an entity from one of them counts towards the three-country minimum for this Pillar I call. EUnita interpretation: ask the Research Enquiry Service or a National Contact Point, both named on the Portal topic page, before relying on one of them.

3. What the call funds

A Doctoral Network is a partnership of organisations from different countries and sectors that runs a doctoral programme. The EU pays the salaries and allowances of the doctoral candidates and fixed amounts for their research, training and networking, and for the management of the network. The candidates are employed by the beneficiaries, enrolled in a doctoral programme, trained together and sent on secondments to other partners. The Work Programme describes the aim as training "creative, entrepreneurial, innovative and resilient doctoral candidates" (p. 12).

How a Doctoral Network works

- **Beneficiaries** sign the grant agreement, recruit at least one doctoral candidate each, host and supervise the candidates and claim the unit contributions (WP p. 72; Guide p. 9).
- **Associated partners** are not signatories. They can host secondments, take part in the supervisory board and give training, but cannot recruit or claim costs (WP p. 68; Guide p. 9).
- **Countries:** further beneficiaries may come from EU Member States, associated countries or low- and middle-income non-associated countries on the List of Participating Countries; their candidates count towards the 540 person-months. High-income third countries are not automatically funded and usually take part at their own cost (Guide p. 9; Info-day Q&A questions 2 and 8).
- **Doctoral candidates** are employed, usually for up to 36 months, and are enrolled in a doctoral programme. A university, or a grouping of institutions entitled to award doctorates, must be in the project (WP p. 72-73).
- **Supervisory board and career development plan:** every network has a supervisory board; every candidate has a career development plan, set up at the start and revised within 18 months (WP p. 16-17).
- **Training:** transferable skills (including digital skills such as generative AI), open science, knowledge valorisation, research integrity and secondments to other partners, including non-academic ones (WP p. 16).

The three modes

Item	Standard DN	Industrial Doctorates (DN-ID)	Joint Doctorates (DN-JD)
Minimum beneficiaries	3 independent entities in 3 different EU Member States or associated countries, 1 or more in an EU Member State	Same	Same; at least 3 independent entities must be entitled to award doctoral degrees
Maximum person-months	540	540	540
Project duration	Up to 48 months	Up to 48 months	Up to 60 months
Fellowship (full time)	3 to 36 months	3 to 36 months	3 to 48 months
Secondments	Up to half of the actual recruitment period (for example 18 of 36 months)	No limit	No limit
Non-academic sector	Encouraged	At least 50% of the fellowship; non-academic entity may be beneficiary or associated partner	Encouraged
Joint supervision	Encouraged	Mandatory, from both sectors	Mandatory
Doctoral degree	Awarded by a degree-awarding university; joint or multiple award optional	Same	Joint, double or multiple degree mandatory; letters of pre-agreement in Part B2
Unit contributions, criteria, panels	Same for all three; all ranked in the eight panels	Same	Same

Source: WP p. 72-74; Guide p. 9-10; Portal Q&A 90987, 90993, 92555. Budget share by mode: no separate budget or quota per mode is published. The budget is divided between the eight panels in

proportion to the number of eligible proposals in each panel (WP p. 76).

Policy anchors and expected outcomes

- The expected impacts in the Work Programme (p. 12): a stronger human capital base in R&I, better working conditions for doctoral candidates, talent and knowledge circulation through international, inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary mobility, Europe's attractiveness as a research destination, sustainable academic and non-academic collaboration, and a culture of open science, innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Expected outcomes for candidates: new research and transferable skills, better employability and networking. For organisations: better doctoral training and supervision, more cooperation between sectors and disciplines, and more internationalisation (WP p. 14-15).
- The Work Programme introduction names an additional "Choose Europe" boost of EUR 70 million in 2026 and EUR 141.5 million in 2027 to the MSCA budget, for Postdoctoral Fellowships and Doctoral Networks. For 2026 it does not give the split between the two actions; for 2027 it allocates EUR 70.75 million to the Doctoral Networks call (WP p. 8, 21).
- The training should follow the EU Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training and the Guidelines for MSCA supervision (WP p. 16).
- Participation of the non-academic sector is "considered essential" (Portal Q&A 90919).

4. Boundaries: avoid the wrong door

Confirmed: this call funds doctoral training in networks. These items are outside it or work differently.

- **Researchers who already hold a doctorate.** A candidate must not hold a doctoral degree at recruitment. A thesis defended but not formally awarded does not qualify (WP p. 73).
- **A single organisation.** At least three independent beneficiaries in three countries are needed (WP p. 72).
- **Costs at actual cost.** The grant pays unit contributions only; it does not reimburse receipts (WP p. 76; Presentation slide 38).
- **Associated partners' costs.** They cannot charge costs. Their costs are treated as covered by the beneficiaries' contributions (Portal Q&A 90982).
- **Affiliated entities** cannot take part (WP p. 72).
- **Extra person-months above the limit.** More than 540 person-months must be funded from other sources and described in Part B, not Part A (Portal Q&A 92317).
- **Excluded participants:** persons and entities in Russia, Belarus and non-government-controlled territories of Ukraine; Chinese universities linked to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (General Annexes p. 10, p. 7; WP p. 73).

Neighbouring calls that may fit better

If you want to	Look at	Identifier and dates (WP)
Fund a postdoctoral researcher	MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships	HORIZON-MSCA-2027-PF-01-01: opens 7 Apr 2027, deadline 8 Sep 2027 (p. 29)
Exchange staff between organisations	MSCA Staff Exchanges	HORIZON-MSCA-2027-SE-01-01: opens 15 Dec 2026, deadline 13 Apr 2027 (p. 38)
Co-fund your own doctoral or postdoctoral programme	MSCA COFUND	HORIZON-MSCA-2027-COFUND-01-01: opens 8 Dec 2026, deadline 6 Apr 2027 (p. 47)

If you want to	Look at	Identifier and dates (WP)
Run a network with a primary focus on AI in science	RAISE Doctoral Networks for AI in Science (RAISE pilot)	HORIZON-RAISE-2026-01-03, same deadline; entered by opting in within the same proposal, section 11 of Part B2 (Guide p. 4)

5. Budget, competition and expected number of grants

Call	Budget (EUR million)	Opening	Deadline	Source
HORIZON-MSCA-2026-DN-01	628.03	28 May 2026	24 Nov 2026, 17:00 Brussels	WP p. 12-13
HORIZON-MSCA-2027-DN-01	645.99	26 May 2027 (planned)	23 Nov 2027, 17:00 Brussels (planned)	WP p. 12, 17; Portal data file 2027

- Confirmed: the budget is indicative and subject to appropriations (WP p. 13). The Work Programme table leaves the expected EU contribution per project blank and marks the indicative number of projects "Not relevant"; the Portal shows 0 expected grants (WP p. 13; Portal data file).
- Confirmed: REA's call page, the Guide and REA's info-day material give EUR 593.03 million. The Work Programme and its General Introduction add a 2026 Choose Europe amount of EUR 70 million for Postdoctoral Fellowships and Doctoral Networks together (WP p. 8). Derived estimate: 628.03 minus 593.03 is 35.00 for Doctoral Networks; 434.05 minus 399.05 is 35.00 for Postdoctoral Fellowships; together 70.00. No document says in words how the amount is split. This analysis uses the Work Programme figure and shows the other (section 2).
- Confirmed: REA's info-day answer says it expects "approximately 130 DN projects under the main MSCA DN budget", stated with a total indicative budget of EUR 593.03 million (question 49, p. 17). This is REA's expectation at the info event, tied to that budget; the Work Programme gives no number.
- Derived estimate: REA's own two figures, EUR 593.03 million divided by about 130 projects, give about EUR 4.6 million a project. This sits inside the range given for a full network of 540 person-months in section 9 (about EUR 3.5 to 5.0 million before other allowances).
- Confirmed: the budget is shared between the eight panels in proportion to the number of eligible proposals received in each. Unused budget moves to other panels, and a panel receives what it needs to fund its top-ranked proposal (WP p. 76; Portal Q&A 90981).

Competition

- Confirmed: in the 2025 call REA reports about EUR 617 million, 1,616 proposals and 141 proposals selected, to recruit more than 2,100 doctoral candidates (info-day presentation, slide 47). The same slide calls it one of the largest calls in Horizon Europe by budget and proposals received.
- Confirmed: REA's answer gives the 2025 success rate as approximately 8.7% and expects about 8% for 2026 (question 49, p. 17; question 28, p. 10). Derived estimate: 141 divided by 1,616 is 8.7%.
- Not published: the number of proposals received in the 2026 call, the success rate by panel and the score of the last funded proposal.

6. What has been funded before

Confirmed: CORDIS lists the following numbers of projects whose master call is the Doctoral Networks call of each year (figures saved from CORDIS on 18 November 2026). The REA call page links lists of the projects selected in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Round	Projects in CORDIS	Call
2021	152	HORIZON-MSCA-2021-DN-01
2022	158	HORIZON-MSCA-2022-DN-01
2023	136	HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01
2024	153	HORIZON-MSCA-2024-DN-01
2025	141	HORIZON-MSCA-2025-DN-01

- Confirmed: an average Doctoral Network under Horizon Europe has 8 beneficiaries and 10 associated partners (Portal Q&A 90920). The figure is for information; there is no prescribed size.
- Confirmed: in 2025, 1,616 proposals, 141 selected, more than 2,100 doctoral candidates to be recruited, more than 1,400 expert evaluators (info-day presentation, slide 47).
- Not stated in the documents cited here: funding by country, including Romania, and the number of Romanian participants.

7. Who should apply, and with which ideas

EUnita interpretation: the call is bottom-up. It has no thematic topic; proposals can come from any research field and are placed in one of eight panels. What matters is the quality of the training programme, the consortium and the plan for the doctoral candidates.

Who fits

- **Coordinators and beneficiaries with a doctoral programme:** universities and research institutes that can recruit, host and supervise candidates and, where needed, award the degree.
- **Non-academic beneficiaries:** companies including SMEs, public bodies and other socio-economic actors that host candidates. In Industrial Doctorates they can be beneficiaries or associated partners (Portal Q&A 90919, 92556).
- **Associated partners:** organisations from any country and sector with a clear, active role such as secondments, training or the supervisory board (Portal Q&A 90918, 90920).
- **Romanian universities and institutes:** eligible as beneficiaries. Derived estimate: the living allowance is 72.6% of the base amount, so a candidate hosted in Romania carries lower unit contributions than one in most Member States (section 9).

Which ideas

- A doctoral programme with a clear scientific theme across several candidate projects, each described in section 1.1 of Part B as text (Portal Q&A 90932).
- Training that adds transferable skills to the research, with a meaningful role for the non-academic sector, as the Impact criterion asks (WP p. 75).
- An Industrial Doctorate where at least half of each fellowship takes place with a non-academic partner, or a Joint Doctorate where partners award joint, double or multiple degrees.
- A network that is sustainable: elements of the doctoral programme that continue after the grant (WP p. 74-75).

8. Eligibility checklist

Marks: ✓ a condition that must be met (Confirmed); ✗ a condition that makes a proposal ineligible if broken; ? a point the documents leave open.

✓	At least three independent legal entities as beneficiaries, each in a different EU Member State or Horizon Europe associated country, at least one in an EU Member State (WP p. 72).
✗	More than 40.0% of the EU contribution allocated to beneficiaries in one country or to one international organisation. The Guide says such proposals are ineligible; the test is on the amount, at submission, on the maximum grant amount (WP p. 72; Guide p. 7).
✓	Every beneficiary recruits at least one doctoral candidate, and hosts and supervises at its premises or through an associated partner linked to it (WP p. 72; Portal Q&A 92556).
✓	A university, or a grouping of institutions entitled to award a doctoral degree, is in the project; if no beneficiary can award degrees it joins as an associated partner or an associated partner linked to a beneficiary (WP p. 72).
✗	More than 540 person-months requested for the network (WP p. 74; Guide p. 5). The Guide says failure to respect the limit means the proposal is declared ineligible (p. 6).
✓	Joint Doctorates: at least three independent entities entitled to award doctoral degrees, one in a Member State or associated country, signed letters of pre-agreement in Part B2, joint governance (WP p. 72-73). The Guide says missing letters "may affect the eligibility of the proposal" (p. 15).
✓	Industrial Doctorates: at least 50% of the fellowship in the non-academic sector and joint supervision by both sectors (WP p. 74; Guide p. 10).
✓	Researchers: no doctoral degree at recruitment; enrolled in a doctoral programme in at least one Member State or associated country (new for 2026: where a beneficiary in a non-associated third country recruits, enrolment may be solely in a programme of that country; not for Joint Doctorates); not more than 12 months resident or active in the recruiting beneficiary's country in the 36 months before recruitment (WP p. 73; Guide p. 4).
✓	Employment contract with full social security coverage; a halved "fixed-amount fellowship" only exceptionally (WP p. 70).
✓	Gender Equality Plan for public bodies, higher education institutions and research organisations from Member States and associated countries; needed before grant signature (Guide p. 7).
✓	Part A lists every participant, including associated partners; Part A prevails over Part B if they differ (Portal Q&A 90930, 90985).
✗	A resubmission barred by the rule: a 2025 proposal below 80% must not be resubmitted; 70% or more of the same recruiting organisations triggers a similarity check by external experts (WP p. 71-72).
✗	Entities in Russia, Belarus or non-government-controlled territories of Ukraine; Chinese universities linked to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (WP p. 73; General Annexes p. 7, 10).
?	Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea: not automatically funded; they usually take part at their own cost unless the granting authority sees their role as essential (Portal Q&A 92559, filed under the RAISE topic; for other high-income third countries Info-day Q&A questions 2 and 8). The documents read do not say whether they count towards the three-country minimum: ask the Research Enquiry Service or a National Contact Point, both named on the Portal topic page, before relying on one.
?	The Work Programme file says its specific conditions apply to the 2027 calls; the 2026 text is in a decision that the call page does not link (see section 2).

9. How the money works

Confirmed: the EU contribution is made only of unit contributions, reimbursed at 100%. Each unit is one person-month of a doctoral candidate. The contribution is calculated from the person-months in Part A (WP p. 69, 76; Portal Q&A 90984).

Contribution (per person-month, full time)	Amount	Source
Living allowance (gross, with country coefficient)	EUR 4,250 x coefficient of the recruiting beneficiary's country	WP p. 70; slide 39 (same amount)
Mobility allowance	EUR 710	WP p. 70; slide 39 (same amount)
Family allowance (if applicable)	EUR 660	WP p. 70; slide 39 (same amount)
Long-term leave allowance (if applicable)	EUR 4,960 x share covered (Work Programme); EUR 4,720 in REA's June 2026 slides (the documents differ; section 2)	WP p. 70; Presentation slide 39
Special needs allowance (if applicable)	Requested unit x 1/number of months; units EUR 3,000 up to EUR 60,000 in ten steps	WP p. 70, footnote 72
Research, training and networking contribution	EUR 1,600	WP p. 70; slide 39 (same amount)
Management and indirect contribution	EUR 1,200	WP p. 70; slide 39 (same amount)

Confirmed: Table 1 of the Work Programme (p. 110) gives the country coefficient for the living allowance: Romania 72.6%, Bulgaria 70%, Poland 77.5%, Germany 101.5%, France 116.6%, Ireland 135.8% (the highest of the EU Member States). Some associated countries are higher, for example Switzerland 163.7%, the United Kingdom 143.5% and Iceland 137.4%. The Guide (p. 12) and REA's info-day answer to question 50 (p. 18) send applicants to this Table 1 for 2026; see the note on footnote 65 in section 2.

Country of the recruiting beneficiary	Coefficient	Derived estimate per person-month	Derived estimate, 36-month fellowship
Romania	72.6%	EUR 6,595.50	EUR 237,438
Bulgaria	70%	EUR 6,485.00	EUR 233,460
Germany	101.5%	EUR 7,823.75	EUR 281,655
Ireland	135.8%	EUR 9,281.50	EUR 334,134

Derived estimate: per person-month, EUR 4,250 x coefficient + EUR 710 + EUR 1,600 + EUR 1,200, without family, long-term leave or special needs allowances. For Romania: 4,250 x 0.726 = 3,085.50; plus 3,510 gives 6,595.50.

- Derived estimate: a network at the limit of 540 person-months receives about EUR 3.50 million if all candidates are recruited in a country with a 70% coefficient, about EUR 3.56 million if all are recruited in Romania, and about EUR 5.01 million if all are recruited in Ireland (about EUR 5.65 million at the Swiss coefficient of 163.7%). The real figure depends on where candidates are recruited. Examples of full networks in the Guide: 15 candidates for 36 months, or 11 candidates for 48 months in a Joint Doctorate (Guide p. 5).
- Confirmed: the beneficiary must pay the candidate at least the living allowance, less compulsory deductions; a top-up is allowed. The mobility allowance covers private mobility costs (WP p. 70).
- Confirmed: the management and indirect contribution goes to each beneficiary per person-month. How it is shared between beneficiaries is decided inside the consortium (Portal Q&A 90983). A consortium agreement is advised.
- Confirmed: part-time work of at least 50% is possible only for personal or family reasons, with prior approval (WP p. 71). A fellowship cannot be extended (Portal Q&A 90972).

- Confirmed: General Annex G (p. 33) gives normal pre-financing of 160% of the average EU funding per reporting period, exceptionally less or none. The model Unit Grant Agreement has the amounts as placeholders, a mutual insurance mechanism and an interim payment ceiling of 90% of the maximum grant amount (Unit Model Grant Agreement data sheet, point 4.2). The figures for a grant are set in its grant agreement.

Obligations after award

- Deliverables (WP p. 77): a supervisory board; a progress report within 30 days after one year; a mid-term meeting with the granting authority; a mobility declaration within 20 days after each recruitment; a career development plan document before the mid-term meeting; questionnaires from each researcher, with a follow-up two years later; a data management plan at mid-term; a dissemination and exploitation plan at mid-term.
- Researchers must have royalty-free access to background and results needed for their work. A partnership agreement with associated partners is encouraged (WP p. 77).
- Recruitment must be open, transparent and merit-based; vacancies are advertised internationally, including on EURAXESS (WP p. 15).

10. Evaluation

Confirmed: proposals are scored on three criteria, each from 0 to 5 with one decimal. Scores are given per criterion, not per aspect, and carry the weights below (WP p. 74-75).

Criterion	Weight	What the Work Programme asks (WP p. 74-75)
Excellence	50%	Quality and pertinence of the research and innovation objectives; soundness of the methodology, including interdisciplinary approaches, the gender dimension and open science; quality and credibility of the training programme, including transferable skills; quality of the supervision, including mandatory joint supervision for Industrial and Joint Doctorates
Impact	30%	Contribution to structuring doctoral training at European level and to European innovation capacity, including the meaningful contribution of the non-academic sector and sustainable programme elements; credibility of measures for career perspectives and employability; dissemination, exploitation and communication
Quality and efficiency of the implementation	20%	Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, risks and effort per work package; quality, capacity and role of each participant, including hosting arrangements, and whether the consortium has the expertise it needs

- Confirmed: each criterion has a minimum threshold of 3 (new in the 2026 call). Proposals scoring at least 70% of the maximum total score and meeting the threshold of 3 on each criterion are considered for funding within the budget; others are rejected (WP p. 74; Guide p. 4; Portal Q&A 92552).
- Confirmed: REA checks eligibility and admissibility; at least three independent external experts evaluate each proposal individually; a consensus report follows; the panel reviews; the system ranks the proposals by total score in each panel (REA evaluation overview).
- Confirmed: eight panels, CHE, SOC, ECO, ENG, ENV, LIF, MAT and PHY. Industrial and Joint Doctorates are ranked in the scientific panel of submission with the standard networks. The first of three to five project descriptors in Part A fixes the panel (WP p. 75-76; Guide p. 4, 15; Portal Q&A 90928).
- Confirmed: ties are resolved first by the Excellence score, then by the Impact score, then by the gender balance among the named supervisors, then, if the panel decides, by further factors such as diversity, non-academic and SME participation, geographical diversity, international

cooperation and employment conditions (WP p. 76).

- Confirmed: applicants receive an evaluation result letter with the evaluation summary report; the coordinator may file an evaluation review request within 30 days of receiving it; it covers procedural failings or factual errors, not the merits (REA evaluation overview; General Annexes p. 29-30).
- Confirmed: each evaluation is made from scratch, with no credit for earlier submissions (Info-day Q&A p. 10).

Resubmission restriction

Confirmed: a proposal submitted to the previous call with a score below 80% must not be resubmitted the following year. A proposal with 70% or more of the same recruiting organisations as such a proposal is assessed for similarity of objectives and scientific approach by external experts, whatever the applicants declare. All applicants state in Part A any similar proposal from the last two calls; REA flags similarities; the REA Admissibility and Eligibility Committee decides (WP p. 71-72; Guide p. 7; Portal Q&A 90927). The restriction concerns the previous call only; the declaration concerns the last two (Info-day Q&A question 17, p. 6).

Overall threshold wording

Confirmed: the Work Programme and Portal Q&A 92552 say 70% of the maximum total score. The general text of the evaluation form says the overall threshold applies to the sum of the three scores and that weighting is only for ranking; REA's evaluation overview mentions 10/15 for MSCA, which is 66.7%, not 70% (70% of 15 is 10.5). EUnita interpretation: that line may be a rounding or an older rule. The Work Programme itself says only "equal to or above 70%"; the words "of the maximum total score" come from Q&A 92552. This analysis follows the Work Programme and the Q&A. A proposal scoring 3.5 on each criterion reaches 70% on the weighted scale (Derived estimate).

11. Application package and timeline

Item	Rule	Source
Platform	EU Funding & Tenders Portal; Part A online, Part B as two PDF files	Portal topic page; Application form PDF p. 24
Part B1	Start page (1 page), table of contents (1 page), list of participating organisations (up to 2 pages), sections 1 to 3 (up to 30 pages); at most 34 pages; section 1 starts on page 5	Application form PDF p. 24; Portal Q&A 90931
Part B2	Sections 4 to 11; no overall page limit; in section 8 at most one page per beneficiary and half a page per associated partner. Letters of pre-agreement for Joint Doctorates go in this file	Application form PDF p. 24; Portal Q&A 90994
Format	PDF only; A4; margins at least 15 mm; minimum font 11 pt, also in tables; references in footnotes at 8 pt, counted in the limit; each file at most 10 MB; acronym and mode (DN, DN-ID or DN-JD) in the header	Application form PDF p. 25
File names	Proposal Number-Acronym-Part B1.pdf and Proposal Number-Acronym-Part B2.pdf	Application form PDF p. 25
Individual projects	Described as text in section 1.1 of Part B1, not as a table	Portal Q&A 90932
Declarations	Resubmission in Part A; use of AI in section 10 of Part B2	Portal Q&A 90927, 90926
Descriptors	Three to five; the first fixes the panel. The Guide (p. 4) and the Portal update say "at least 3"	Guide p. 4, 15; Portal topic page

Item	Rule	Source
Submission	Proposals can be edited and resubmitted until the deadline; only the last submitted version is evaluated	Guide p. 15

Date	Event	Status	Source
28 May 2026	Call opens; submission session available	Confirmed	WP p. 13; Portal topic page
3 June 2026	Info day (online)	Confirmed	REA call page
2 July 2026	Update: panel fixed by the first descriptor; Guide Version 5.1	Confirmed	Portal topic page
24 November 2026, 17:00 Brussels time	Deadline (18:00 in Romania)	Confirmed	WP p. 13
April 2027	Applicants told whether the proposal is selected	REA timetable, planned	REA call page
26 May 2027	Next round opens	Work Programme, planned	WP p. 17
July 2027	Grant agreements signed	REA timetable, planned	REA call page
September 2027	First projects start	REA timetable, planned	REA call page
23 November 2027, 17:00 Brussels time	Next round deadline	Work Programme, planned	WP p. 17

Confirmed: REA says the evaluation phase can last up to five months after the deadline and that the grant agreement is usually signed within three months after the results. The General Annexes give the same order as indicative: results about 5 months and signature about 8 months after the deadline (REA how-to-apply page; General Annexes p. 30). Exact dates after the deadline: not published.

12. Risks and red flags

1. **Competition.** In 2025, 141 of 1,616 proposals were funded, about 8.7%. REA expects about 8% in 2026. A score of 70% and 3 on each criterion only makes a proposal considered for funding within the budget.
2. **Eligibility risks before evaluation.** Fewer than three countries. More than 40.0% of the EU contribution in one country or one international organisation, or more than 540 person-months: the Guide says such proposals are declared ineligible. A beneficiary that recruits nobody: every beneficiary must recruit at least one doctoral candidate, and the Guide says the location of recruitment may affect eligibility. Missing letters of pre-agreement in a Joint Doctorate: the entity is excluded, which may affect the eligibility of the proposal (Part B template, section 9).
3. **The 40.0% rule is on amounts.** It counts the country coefficient, so a country with a high coefficient takes a larger share of the budget for the same person-months (Guide p. 7).
4. **Resubmission.** A 2025 proposal below 80% must not come back. A proposal sharing 70% or more of the recruiting organisations is checked for similarity. A proposal scoring below 80% in this call falls under the same rule for the 2027 call (EUnita interpretation of the text, which refers to the previous call).
5. **Late joiners.** Changes to the consortium after submission are limited: "There will be no possibility for significant changes to content, budget and consortium composition during grant preparation"

(Part B template).

6. **Submission mechanics.** Two PDFs of at most 10 MB; the pages above the limit are blanked out for the evaluators; submit early (Application form PDF p. 24-25).
7. **Figures that differ between documents.** EUR 628.03 million against EUR 593.03 million (see section 2 for the Choose Europe amount that fits the gap), and EUR 4,960 against EUR 4,720 for the long-term leave allowance (the Work Programme says its specific conditions apply to the 2027 calls and refers to a separate decision for 2026). No amount per project is published.
8. **Deadline can move.** The Director-General may delay it by up to two months; none is announced (WP p. 13).
9. **Associated partners claim nothing.** Their costs must be covered by the beneficiaries' unit contributions; a partnership agreement is encouraged (WP p. 77; Portal Q&A 90982).

13. EUnita recommendations

EUnita interpretation: the advice depends on where an organisation stands on 18 November 2026.

1. **If your proposal is written:** use the time before the deadline of 24 November 2026 for rule checks, not new text. Count the countries. Test the 40.0% rule on amounts with the coefficients of section 9. Check that each beneficiary recruits, that the total stays at or below 540 person-months and that Part A equals Part B. Check formats, file sizes and descriptors, and submit early, since you can resubmit until the deadline.
2. **If you were asked to join as an associated partner:** send the coordinator your legal name, Participant Identification Code and a precise role such as hosting secondments, training or the supervisory board. No letter of commitment is needed. You cannot recruit or claim costs.
3. **If you were asked to join as a beneficiary:** ask whether the coordinator can still rework the budget table, the 40.0% test and the text. If not, offer an associated-partner role before the deadline and aim for beneficiary status in the next round.
4. **If you have no written proposal:** target the round that opens on 26 May 2027 and closes on 23 November 2027. Use the months to choose the mode, fix at least three countries, identify the institution that awards the degree, line up associated partners and non-academic hosts, and draft the training programme. Check the 2027 call documents when published.
5. **For Romanian organisations:** the call is open on the same terms as for any Member State; the Romanian coefficient of 72.6% means lower unit contributions per candidate than in many other Member States, so check the 40.0% rule if Romanian beneficiaries carry a large share of the person-months.
6. **Check the primary texts before you submit:** the Guide for Applicants (Version 5.1), the Part B template and the evaluation form are short and decide any detail.

Unresolved points

- The text of Commission Decision C(2025) 8493 of 11 December 2025, named in the Work Programme for the 2026 calls, is not linked from the call page; it may differ on unit contributions and coefficients.
- How the 2026 Choose Europe amount of EUR 70 million is split between Doctoral Networks and Postdoctoral Fellowships: not stated in words; the figures fit EUR 35.00 million each (section 2).
- Whether the 70% total threshold applies to the weighted total or the sum of the three scores: the documents differ (section 2).
- Number of proposals received in 2026, and the date of the evaluation results beyond "April 2027" in REA's timetable: not published.
- Guide for Applicants, templates and evaluation form for the 2027 round: not published. The Romanian National Contact Point for MSCA: not named in the call documents; the Portal's National Contact Point directory is the official list.
- Whether an entity from Canada, Japan, New Zealand or the Republic of Korea counts towards the three-country minimum: not stated in the documents read. Whether any helpdesk will advise on the eligibility of a named organisation: not stated.

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Checked 18 November 2026. Official updates prevail.