European Commission

Joint Doctorates under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

What works, what matters, what next

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November 2026

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European Research Executive Agency
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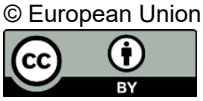
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Abbreviations

BA:	Bachelor of Arts
DESCA:	Development of a Simplified Consortium Agreement
DN:	Doctoral Networks
DS:	Doctoral School
ECTS:	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EEA:	European Education Area
EHEA:	European Higher Education Area
EJD:	European Joint Doctorate
ERA:	European Research Area
EUAs:	European University Alliances
EUI:	European Universities Initiative
HE:	Horizon Europe
HEI:	Higher Education Institution
JD:	Joint Doctorate
MA:	Master of Arts
MCAA:	Marie Curie Alumni Association
MSCA:	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
NCP:	National Contact Point
PhD:	Doctor of Philosophy
PI:	Principal Investigator
REA:	European Research Executive Agency

Foreword

Joint Doctorates are a strategic asset for Europe's competitiveness and capacity to attract, develop and retain talent. At a time when Europe must strengthen its position as a global hub for research and innovation and attract the brightest minds from around the world, the role of Joint Doctorates has never been more important.

By bringing together universities, research organisations and non-academic partners across borders, Joint Doctorates deliver far more than high-quality doctoral training alone. They connect the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, foster lasting institutional partnerships and equip doctoral candidates with the skills, networks and international experience needed to thrive in an increasingly competitive global environment. They can also help advance the implementation of the European Degree Label and the development of the future European Degree, to make it easier for universities to deliver Joint Doctorates.

This ambition is firmly aligned with the European Commission's broader political priorities. Through initiatives such as Choose Europe for Science and the Union of Skills, the Commission has underlined the importance of making Europe a destination of choice for outstanding researchers and talented students. Joint Doctorates translate this ambition into practice: they enhance the international visibility of European universities and research organisations, offer attractive research and training pathways and help create the conditions for talent to flourish in and remain connected to Europe.

This report takes stock of what Joint Doctorates deliver – and what Europe must do to unlock their full potential. Drawing on the 2025 survey of participants in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Joint Doctorate projects funded between 2019 and 2024, and on the discussions at the Joint Doctorates cluster event held on 13 November 2025, it examines their benefits, identifies persistent obstacles and showcases good practices. It also sets out practical recommendations for project participants, higher education and research institutions, national authorities and European actors.

The findings confirm the considerable added value of Joint Doctorates. They foster long-term research collaborations, enhance the quality and international dimension of doctoral training and strengthen candidates' career prospects. Yet the findings also reveal a persistent gap between European ambition and implementation on the ground. Fragmented national rules, complex institutional procedures and demanding administrative requirements continue to make the design and delivery of joint, double and multiple doctoral degree unnecessarily difficult.

The central lesson is clear: European excellence must be supported by an enabling framework for cooperation. Ambitious policy objectives will deliver their full value only if the rules, procedures and institutional arrangements supporting them are fit for purpose. In this regard, the report introduces a practical template for developing the administrative agreements needed to establish joint, double and multiple doctoral degrees. This is a concrete step towards reducing complexity, facilitating implementation and enabling institutions to translate European cooperation ambitions into sustainable practice.

Unlocking the full potential of Joint Doctorates requires coordinated action at every level. The way forward should focus on improving compatibility between various national and regional frameworks, providing clearer guidance and communication, offering practical support for higher education and research institutions, and fostering closer links with the European Degree Label, the future European Degree, European Universities Alliances and wider European Research Area initiatives.

Joint Doctorates are an investment in Europe's future. They bring education and research closer together, strengthen cross-border cooperation and contribute to the development of a more competitive, attractive and integrated European Higher Education Area and European Research Area. Realising their full potential requires sustained commitment and shared responsibility at the European, national and institutional levels. This report contributes to that effort by providing evidence, practical tools and recommendations to turn European ambition into tangible impact.

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Executive summary

This 2026 edition of the Joint Doctorate (JD) guidelines report examines the implementation, impact and sustainability of JDs under Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA), based on a survey of 217 stakeholders – including coordinators, supervisors, project managers and doctoral candidates – and on insights from the JDs cluster event held on 13 November 2025. JDs, which are formalised joint, double or multiple degrees awarded by institutions across different countries, are a strategic priority for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA). They serve the aim of enhancing doctoral training quality, international collaboration and ties between academia and industry.

The main motivations of institutional stakeholders, such as coordinators, supervisors and project managers, to apply for JD funding relate to long-term strategic goals, including research network development, enhanced career prospects for doctoral candidates and attracting excellent PhD fellows. Doctoral candidates are primarily drawn to JDs for academic reasons, valuing the joint degree structure, research topic and team. However, many candidates reported they were unaware that their chosen programme was a JD at the application stage, highlighting a need for better communication in higher education and research.

Despite their strategic importance, JDs face significant administrative and legal challenges that complicate the proposal preparation, project implementation and achievement of sustainable impact. During the proposal phase, the main obstacle is compliance with divergent national regulations and institutional PhD requirements. Applicants often rely on pre-existing networks or university alliances to mitigate these challenges, though first-time coordinators report a steep learning curve. Moreover, integrating non-academic partners (e.g. small and medium-sized enterprises, hospitals and large enterprises) remains difficult due to legal and short-term planning constraints and limited hosting capacity.

Implementation is further complicated by delays in signing administrative agreements, attributed to the lack of standardised templates, slow university approval processes and incompatible legal frameworks. Doctoral candidates cite visa and immigration issues as major frustrations, though most find the workload associated with the programmes manageable. However, 20 % report excessive demands or supervision challenges, such as conflicting advice or delayed feedback. Despite this, 75 % value the interdisciplinary research opportunities and international exposure, considering JDs to be more enriching than traditional PhDs.

Concerning the long-term impact of JDs, the post-project funding gap is the primary threat to continued collaboration, alongside restrictive national regulations and partner disengagement once EU funding ends. Stakeholders

propose extending consortium agreements beyond the project life cycle, applying for sequential JD projects and integrating joint or double PhD options into existing doctoral programmes. Concerningly, only a minority of doctoral candidates believe their JD will enhance CV recognition, and many remain uncertain about its employability benefits outside academia, underscoring the need for greater promotion and recognition of these degrees.

To improve JD implementation, stakeholders proposed a set of policy recommendations. At the European level, greater flexibility in timelines for finalising administrative agreements, given the extended project duration (up to 60 months), is wished for. Stakeholders also call for the provision of standardised templates and guidance for PhD agreements while preserving institutional autonomy. Strengthening European Universities Alliances and discussions between Doctoral Schools is deemed essential for alignment across institutions and long-term sustainability.

At the national and institutional levels, early engagement of administrative, legal and human resources units in proposal development is advised, along with the integration of JD best practices into institutional frameworks. The European Degree Label and the European Degree are seen as a promising step towards enhancing recognition, though stakeholders warn against over-standardisation, which could undermine academic freedom and institutional diversity. Instead, they advocate for a flexible, inclusive approach allowing multiple degree formats to coexist.

In conclusion, the report confirms that JDs are a cornerstone of European doctoral collaboration, offering unique benefits to researchers, institutions and the broader higher education ecosystem. However, their potential is constrained by administrative, legal and financial barriers. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-layered approach, combining European-level support, national harmonisation and institutional capacity building. By aligning project-level practices with long-term policy initiatives – such as the European Degree Label, the European Degree and European Universities Alliances – JDs can drive lasting structural changes in doctoral education, enhance the EU's research competitiveness and prepare the next generation of researchers to tackle global challenges. The findings serve as both a repository of guidance and a call to action for policymakers, university leaders and funding bodies to collaborate on removing obstacles and sustaining these highly impactful programmes.

The report concludes by proposing two actionable short- to medium-term policy priorities to (1) encourage EU Member States and Horizon-Europe-associated countries to further adapt their national rules on JDs and communicate about them; and (2) develop stronger synergies between MSCA Doctoral Networks, the European Degree Label and the future European Degree to reduce barriers to transnational cooperation.

It also recommends five specific actions for the European Research Executive Agency: (1) provide information to JD participants through seminars and information days; (2) support the establishment of a network of current and former JD coordinators; (3) continue with the organisation of the annual coordinators' information day; (4) publish updated versions of this report regularly; and (5) organise a future cluster event to facilitate continued sharing of experiences and address emerging challenges.

1. Chapter 1 – Background

1.1. Joint Doctorates – origins, goals, requirements and the future

1.1.1. Origins

One of the aims of the EU is to work towards the creation of more harmonised and coherent higher education systems in Europe. Such a policy goal was solidified by the launch of the European Higher Education Area in 2010, which emerged thanks to the preparatory work done under the framework of the Bologna process over 1999–2010.

The European Higher Education Area aims not to standardise national higher education systems but to make them more compatible. As such, it introduced the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) to compare academic credits across borders and organisations according to a framework for qualifications based on three cycles (bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctoral degree) and a common quality assurance system to build trust between institutions.

In parallel, the EU also fostered the European Research Area, launched in 2000 with the goal of creating a single, borderless market for research, innovation and technology.

In this context, Joint Doctorates (JDs) are regarded by the European Commission as a strategic tool because of their potential to reinforce both the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, their structuring effects on universities, their ability to attract international research talent to Europe and their ripple effect on human resources policies.

1.1.2. Goals and requirements

Within the scope of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), which aim to support the mobility, training and career development of researchers across Europe, JDs are a specific type of action under Doctoral Networks (DNs). Funded under Horizon Europe (2021–2027), they are a continuation of the European Joint Doctorates (EJDs) funded under the previous work programme, Horizon 2020 (2014–2020).

Like other types of DNs, JDs foster international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration in doctoral training, but they also go a step further

in promoting collaboration within the higher education sphere by requiring the awarding of joint, double or multiple doctoral degrees. Indeed, the primary goal of JDs is to enhance the global attractiveness and competitiveness of European doctoral training by promoting strong institutional collaboration, mobility across disciplines and sectors, and high-quality supervision. Consequently, JDs require participating institutions to establish dedicated programmes, leading to officially recognised degrees issued by at least two higher education institutions from EU Member States or Horizon-Europe-associated countries. In this way, they aim to support the development of structured and long-term partnerships between universities and also with research institutions and non-academic organisations (e.g. small and medium-sized enterprises, large enterprises or for-profit public bodies), ensuring that doctoral candidates (DCs) benefit from these highly integrated training environments.

The defining features of JDs are (1) the mandatory pre-agreements between the Joint/Double/Multiple degree-awarding institutions established when the JD proposal is submitted (confirming their commitment to awarding joint, double or multiple degrees); (2) the required procedures for joint admission and selection of the DCs, involving all degree-awarding partners; (3) the mandatory joint delivery of supervision, monitoring and assessment, with harmonised assessment criteria leading to a legally recognised joint, double or multiple degree; and (4) the formalisation of these procedures through agreements signed by the PhD-awarding institutions in the first six months of the project's implementation, ensuring compliance with local, national and MSCA-specific funding requirements.

Since the 2022 MSCA DNs call for proposals, there has been no ceiling on secondment duration for JDs, allowing DCs to spend extended periods at partner institutions to fulfil degree requirements. In addition, since the 2023 DNs call, JDs have offered greater flexibility in fellowship duration, allowing doctoral candidates to be recruited for up to 48 months (compared with the standard 36 months in other DN modalities), with a maximum project duration of 60 months. Furthermore, as is the case for all DNs, JDs must adhere to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, ensuring transparency, gender equality and career development support, and to the MSCA Green Charter, which encourages environmentally sustainable practices in project implementation.

In summary, JDs represent a highly integrated and ambitious form of doctoral training under the MSCA, designed to break down silos between universities, harmonise degree recognition across Europe and produce highly skilled researchers capable of addressing complex global challenges. By requiring formalised joint programmes and degrees, JDs not only enhance the employability and innovation capacity of DCs but also contribute to the long-term structuring of European higher education and research ecosystems.

1.1.3. The future

JDs are tightly connected to the creation of an official European Degree, a goal outlined by the European Commission in 2024 in a dedicated blueprint. To create the conditions for such a degree to become a reality, the European Council agreed to a stepwise approach in 2025.

In the initial phase, running from 2026 to 2028, an initiative to grant a Joint European Degree Label to existing or new joint degree programmes is currently under way. Such a Label should be issued when the degree programme in question meets a specific set of criteria, namely:

- it involves at least two participating Higher Education Institutions from two Member States (with the possibility of also involving institutions from non-EU countries);
- it complies with Bologna process standards;
- it consists of a joint degree, where students are co-evaluated and co-supervised for their PhD dissertations;
- it entails a commitment to shared values, including environmental sustainability, multilingualism and inclusiveness;
- it allows for interdisciplinarity, research-based learning, digitalisation and learning opportunities beyond academia and employability.

Based on the experience that will be gained in the initial phase with the introduction of the Label, and on continuous reflection on the barriers to delivering joint programmes and degrees, a new phase will be launched in 2029 with the introduction of an official European Degree. Such a Degree would allow students to receive a European diploma at the end of their studies, which would be a transnational Bachelor of Arts (BA), Master of Arts (MA) or PhD automatically recognised across the EU and jointly awarded on the basis of a common set of criteria.

The ongoing work on European Degrees is also expected to strengthen the European Universities Initiative, which was launched in 2019 with the aim of establishing alliances between higher education institutions from across Europe for the benefit of their students and staff and of society at large. Such alliances are based on long-term, structural, sustainable and systemic cooperation protocols.

For all these reasons, JDs should be regarded not only as a specific type of MSCA DN project, but also as a strategic tool for realising crucial European policies in the field of higher education systems, in their capacity to help Higher Education Institutions to coordinate their programmes and tighten their cooperation.

1.2. The 2025 Joint Doctorates survey and its key findings

The 2025 survey on European Joint Doctorates (EJD) and Joint Doctorates (JD) evaluates the challenges, solutions and unmet needs of these collaborative doctoral programmes funded under the MSCA. The survey targeted 63 projects, namely the 24 EJDs funded since the 2019 call for proposals under Horizon 2020 and the 39 JDs funded until the 2014 call under Horizon Europe.

These 63 projects were selected among 487 eligible applications, and, together, they received a total budget of EUR 232 million and represent 654 organisations (from 24 Member States, 9 Horizon-Europe-associated countries and 12 other non-EU countries) and 764 researchers from 91 countries (391 from Member States). Responses were collected from 217 participants, including 78 support team members (coordinators, project managers and supervisors) and 139 PhD fellows, between June and September 2025.

The main survey findings were presented at the JDs cluster event to initiate the discussions. A more detailed presentation of its results is included in Annex 3, while the main outputs of the discussions held during the JDs cluster event are detailed in Chapter 2.

Concerning the methodology, the survey was designed to capture first-hand experiences from the participants. It addressed three core themes for support teams – proposal preparation, project implementation, and incentives / lasting impact – while exploring fellows' motivations for applying and their experiences during the programme. The survey achieved a 100 % response rate from targeted projects, with 81 % of the projects providing input from support team members and 62 % providing responses from fellows. An average of four responses per project were recorded.

1.2.1. Motivations to participate in European Joint Doctorate / Joint Doctorate projects

The motivations to participate in EJD/JD projects are quite distinct between PhD fellows and support team members.

For the PhD support teams, comprising coordinators, principal investigators and project managers, the decision to pursue a JD or EJD is primarily driven by strategic academic objectives, with 70 % of respondents citing the development of long-term research networks as their foremost motivation. Enhancing career prospects for doctoral candidates (43 %) and attracting excellent PhD researchers (40 %) follow close behind, together with improving training quality (37 %). While financial incentives, such as extended funding durations and

increased person-months, also play a role, they are considered secondary to the collaborative and academic benefits that these projects offer.

For PhD fellows, a large proportion (42 %) are interested in the joint/double/multiple PhD in itself. A slightly lower proportion (37 %) are motivated by the topic, research team or university. Only one respondent cited financial considerations as a deciding factor, suggesting that academic and intellectual motivations predominate among doctoral candidates. Notably, 8 % of fellows were unaware that their programme was a JD or EJD at the time of application, indicating a need to raise awareness about these types of projects.

1.2.2. Preparation of a European Joint Doctorate / Joint Doctorate proposal

The applicants presenting an EJD or JD proposal experience substantial administrative and legal hurdles during the preparation phase. Complying with the different structures/requirements of the PhD-delivering institutions is reported as the most difficult aspect (63 %), closely followed by aligning with the different national regulations, laws and policies for doctoral education (60 %). These differences make it difficult to establish a joint governance structure and obtain the necessary pre-agreement letters. The integration of non-academic partners, such as hospitals and small and medium-sized enterprises, was reported as difficult by 15 % of respondents, often due to legal requirements, short-term planning constraints, risk associated with change of governance leading to decommitment, and/or limited hosting capacity.

To mitigate these issues, most of the applicants (63 %) rely on their existing network to serve as a basis for the consortium composition, with some already being part of a European Universities Alliance (13 %). They also take advantage of previous experience in drafting EJD/JD proposals (43 %) and of pre-existing templates for the pre-agreement letters (37 %). To address the difficulties related to the integration of non-academic partners, the applicants either limited the number of secondments in the non-academic sector or secured a fourth year for these secondments.

The respondents call for further support at the European level, with templates and guidelines to facilitate smoother proposal development and with opportunities to liaise with other EJD/JD networks to exchange good practices. The establishment of a European Degree Label and/or a European Degree is also expected to provide significant support by almost 50 % of the respondents.

1.2.3. European Joint Doctorate / Joint Doctorate project implementation

The implementation of EJD/JD projects raises persistent bureaucratic and logistical challenges, particularly in finalising joint/double/multiple PhD agreements. While 50 % of the quickest agreement processes are completed within six months, this process usually takes much more time, up to two years in some cases.

Key obstacles highlighted by the support teams are related to administrative and legal issues, and they include the absence of standards to inform development of the agreements (51 %), delays in university approvals (49 %) and additional requirements stemming from different national legal frameworks (40 %). Incompatible rules concerning practical aspects, such as the set-up of the oral defence or scoring systems/requirements, are additional barriers. The recruitment of the PhD fellows present additional difficulties. Visas and work permits are a major concern (60 %), and the difficulties in identifying suitable candidates (51 %) and aligning EU funding rules with national labour laws (33 %) further complicate the process. Once enrolled, supervision and monitoring placed significant demands on both supervisors and administrators. Excessive administrative workloads are reported by 66 % of support team members, while differences in monitoring tools/requirements (49 %) and variations in supervision culture/practices (39 %) further increase the burden. The organisation of secondments also entailed substantial planning difficulties (55 %), with 36 % of respondents finding the 36-month funding period insufficient to facilitate meaningful collaborative research. Many fellows experienced frequent relocations, sometimes moving three or more times within three years, which added to the logistical and personal strain of the programme.

From the perspective of PhD fellows, administrative burdens were also a particular source of frustration, with 50 % struggling with divergent university procedures, including duplicate paperwork, overlapping course requirements and immigration hurdles – the latter being especially problematic for fellows from non-EU countries. The workload was generally manageable for 53 % of respondents, though 19 % found it excessively demanding. Experiences of the quality of supervision were mixed: while 48 % felt they benefited from diverse expertise due to multiple supervisors, 19 % encountered coordination problems, such as conflicting advice or delayed feedback. Despite these challenges, fellows overwhelmingly value the interdisciplinary research opportunities (76 %) and international exposure (67 %), which are more compelling than traditional PhD opportunities. The richness of the research opportunity, with access to a broader range of topics, fields and/or institutions, and to more expertise and resources, is another example of the added value of the joint/double/multiple PhD for fellows.

To address the issues raised, the support team members call primarily for actions at the level of the universities, such as standardisation of administrative practices/requirements across institutions (58 %) and the establishment of long-

lasting networks of universities interested in delivering joint/double/multiple degrees (42 %). On the level of EU institutions, they would welcome the creation of templates for the development of administrative agreements (54 %), guidance for the establishment of joint initiatives (31 %), standards for joint supervision (30 %) and the endorsement of joint initiatives/PhDs at the European level (19 %). The establishment of standards for the training of supervisors is less commonly mentioned, but the number of responses highlighting this solution, in particular from the supervisors themselves, increased in the recent call.

1.2.4. Lasting impact of European Joint Doctorate / Joint Doctorate projects

The lasting impact of EJD/JD projects on the participating organisations and the field of higher education in general remains a concern for the survey participants. Seventy-three per cent of support team respondents identified post-project funding gaps as the primary threat to long-term collaboration, while 35 % cited restrictive national regulations and 26 % referenced partner disengagement once EU funding concluded. To address these risks, support team members suggested extending agreements between the consortium members beyond the funding period (47 %), applying for sequential JD projects (45 %) to maintain momentum, integrating double/joint PhD options into existing doctoral programmes (40 %), establishing formalised agreements for joint/double/multiple PhDs with universities outside the project consortium and/or participating in European Universities Alliances.

For the PhD fellows, the long-term career benefits of these programmes remain less clear than the academic benefits. Only 33 % believe their JD would enhance CV recognition, and 24 % are uncertain about its impact on employability, particularly outside academia. This ambiguity suggests a need for greater advocacy to ensure that JDs are widely recognised and valued in both academic and non-academic sectors.

1.2.5. Evolution of the support for European Joint Doctorate / Joint Doctorate

Looking at the evolution of the support provided to the implementation of EJD and JD projects since 2014, the survey reveals uneven perceived progress. Most participants from the support teams (44 % of total respondents) see an improvement, while 26 % of responses note a worsening of the situation.

At the level of higher education, the positive evolution is seen as the increased interest in or acceptance of the joint/double/multiple PhD and/or better harmonisation across universities. In contrast, the perceived deterioration relates to tighter national regulations, more stringent university policies and/or a decreased willingness among universities to establish complex cooperations.

At the European level, the increasing support provided to EJD/JD projects is praised, as well as the available incentives to participate in EJD/JD projects, in particular the extension of JD project duration (85 % favoured a five-year programme, including four years of fellow funding), unlimited secondments (38 %) and the inclusion of third country partners (i.e. located neither in EU Member States nor in HE Associated Countries) in PhD enrolment (24 %).

Additional incentives are proposed by the respondents, such as higher budgets than standard DNs or the introduction of a European Degree Label.

The main results of this survey were presented during the breakout sessions of the JDs cluster event to introduce the discussions had by the participants; the outputs of these discussions are presented in the next chapters of this report.

1.3. The 2025 JDs cluster event

The JDs cluster event took place online on 13 November 2025 and stakeholders from all JD projects funded up to that point under the framework of Horizon Europe were invited. It was designed to bring together a broad range of JD consortium members (coordinators, project managers and principal investigators) with representatives from European institutions to exchange lessons on and experiences of JD implementation, identify the most common challenges, define good practices and provide input for ongoing policy developments at the European level. As such, the event built on the data collected via the survey on JDs presented above.

As shown in Annex 2 of this document, the JDs cluster event featured an opening and a closing plenary session, as well as two parallel workshops, delivered in three thematic sessions that took place in dedicated virtual rooms.

In total, the event had 95 participants: 53 people involved in JD projects (in the capacity of coordinator, project manager or principal investigator), three European Commission representatives from the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, two European Research Executive Agency (REA) JD correspondents moderating the discussions, two rapporteurs and 35 REA officers and management staff members.

During the first plenary session, REA representatives provided general results from the survey, including the contributions from the PhD fellows. Then, representatives from the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture provided an overview of ongoing policy developments, including the introduction of the European Degree Label and the longer-term prospect of a European Degree. Participants could thus note the relevance of JDs to such goals as well as the potential of these policies to address some of the main challenges encountered by JD consortia, particularly in relation to administrative

fragmentation and degree recognition. Participants from two JD projects also presented their experiences and lessons learned.

The main part of the JDs cluster event was dedicated to workshops, allowing for in-depth discussions among the JD project participants. To cover all the main phases of a project (from proposal preparation to post-project sustainability), three thematic sessions were organised: (1) before the project (preparing a JD proposal), (2) during the project (implementing a JD project) and (3) after the project (ensuring long-term structuring impact). To optimise the exchange, the participants were divided into two groups of 30 people each, both addressing these three themes in parallel workshops. Since most projects were represented by two people, these individuals were assigned to different groups so that each group included representatives from as many projects as possible.

The discussions provided a broad overview of experiences and perspectives, offering valuable insights into both widely shared challenges and more specific implementation experiences. Chapter 2 of this document provides a detailed description of the event's main outcomes. In each group, each thematic session was introduced through a brief presentation of the main results of the survey on the relevant theme.

At the end of the JDs cluster event, the outputs of the discussions of each group were presented in a closing plenary session and discussed.

2. Chapter 2 – Exchange of experiences, good practices and lessons learned

The outputs of discussions held in the two parallel workshops are presented below, together with some original inputs collected through the survey. They concern proposal preparation, project implementation and the actions required to ensure the sustainable impact of JD projects.

While some tasks are inherently more complex than others, in any legal, administrative and cultural context and in any research domain, including the signature of joint/double/multiple/multiple PhD agreements, involvement of project participants with previous experience and access to previously developed templates can considerably reduce such complexity. In addition, even though there is no single model applicable to all JDs, sharing experiences and solutions from various contexts can help identify when, where and how to direct efforts, and avoid overlooking less obvious, but still crucial, areas such as communication with stakeholders outside the consortium.

2.1. Before the project – proposal preparation

The preparation phase of a JD proposal was identified as particularly demanding, requiring the alignment of scientific objectives, training structures and administrative practices.

Participants agreed that successful proposals go beyond scientific excellence and must demonstrate a clear and credible doctoral training framework. In particular, well-defined supervision arrangements and transparent governance structures were considered essential to demonstrate the added value of the JD format.

Early preparation was consistently identified as a critical success factor. Starting well in advance of the call deadline allows for the integration of feedback, alignment among partners and the development of robust governance arrangements.

Structuring the time spent by doctoral candidates in different places was also highlighted as critical, due to the mandatory enrolment of fellows in at least two PhD-awarding institutions, as well as to the requirement for intersectoral collaboration (common to all DN projects).

Participants also highlighted the importance of early involvement of institutional actors beyond the research team. Administrative, legal and financial units play a key role in ensuring a smooth implementation of the project and should thus be consulted in the preparation of a JD proposal in addition to scientific staff. Limited engagement at this stage was indeed identified as a source of later delays.

During this breakout session, participants focused the discussion on three main topics:

- consortium composition,
- JD requirements and national regulations,
- letters of pre-agreement.

2.1.1. Consortium composition

Consortium building was found to rely predominantly on existing collaborations and trusted partnerships, which can greatly reduce the complexity of building an entirely new consortium from the ground up. Participants expressed limited confidence in formal partner search tools, emphasising instead the importance of building stable and robust networks and of long-term relationships. However, the dedicated MSCA Matchmaking Platform, which allows users to look for project partners, publish their profile and advertise their hosting arrangements for fellows, was considered helpful in the process.

Existing international frameworks, such as European Universities Alliances, were considered particularly valuable, as they facilitate alignment across institutions, support project implementation and contribute to long-term sustainability.

Alumni networks were also highlighted as an important resource. Former doctoral candidates can indeed support the development of new partnerships and strengthen institutional links across sectors.

Finally, some JD project participants noted in the survey some difficulties in terms of including non-academic organisations in consortia. The main issues they noted were (1) identifying such partners, (2) obtaining formal commitment from or establishing formalised collaboration with them, (3) harmonising practices with them and (4) dealing with their potentially limited hosting capacity. In this context, additional difficulties may also arise from stricter legal/regulatory standards across different institutions, limitations due to short-term planning and changes to governance in one or more institution, which can lead to decommitment.

To address these issues, consortia usually rely on the knowledge and resources of their network and on the development of dedicated agreement templates or guidance documents.

2.1.2. Joint Doctorate requirements and national regulations

Ensuring full compliance with JD-specific requirements remains a major challenge at proposal stage. Participants reported that differences between

national regulations and institutional practices often create uncertainty, even for experienced coordinators.

Ensuring compliance with European requirements and diverse legal frameworks complicates the design of joint governance structures. In addition, changes to national legislation can introduce further unpredictability.

The learning curve for first-time coordinators was described as particularly steep. On this point, participants stressed that getting in touch with National Contact Points during the proposal set-up phase can be particularly useful, as they were identified as an important source of support and guidance for applying MSCA rules at the national level, ensuring compliance with both national and European rules and understanding differences across multiple legal systems. National Contact Points can also be helpful in terms of anticipating potential changes to relevant national legislation.

Furthermore, participants observed that in many European universities there are centralised Doctoral Schools setting up models, standardised practices (such as supervision and mentoring guidelines) and support for fellows from all faculties. Such Doctoral Schools were thus seen as a very helpful means to reconcile and negotiate the sometimes competing requirements associated with MSCA funding conditions, national regulations and the practices of individual universities.

2.1.3. Letters of pre-agreement for joint, double or multiple degrees

The preparation of pre-agreement letters for joint, double or multiple degrees, a mandatory component of every JD proposal, was identified as a critical step in the project. Participants reported that securing such agreements can be challenging, particularly when institutional stakeholders are not fully aligned.

Administrative and financial units may indeed be reluctant to commit at an early stage, especially when legal and budgetary implications remain unclear. This highlights the need for improved internal communication within institutions, and the involvement of non-scientific units in the discussion of the proposal so that legal implications can be anticipated and discussed.

Furthermore, the ability of promoters to pitch their project idea convincingly both within their own and to partnering organisations was flagged as crucial to enhance the chances of success. Presentation and negotiation skills were thus highlighted as vital to the set-up of proposals, in addition to scientific expertise.

The organisation of dedicated ‘JD days’ within universities, with the aim of gathering all relevant personnel to discuss potential project ideas, agree on shared approaches and exchange experiences and best practices, was suggested as an additional way of overcoming internal barriers. In addition, developing and circulating information sheets covering JD rules as well as

European, national and institution-specific requirements (including supervision practices and joint recruitment and governance guidelines) was mentioned as a tool to facilitate the decision-making process.

The availability of a clear template to aid the development of pre-agreement letters for setting up joint/double/multiple doctorates was also highlighted as crucial for the successful completion of the set-up phase. Note that a template is available in the documentation package published when an MSCA DN call for proposals is launched; it can be found at the end of the proposal template. Participants indicated that gaining familiarity with it and referring to it during the preparation phase is essential.

Finally, it was suggested that dedicated training courses for project coordinators could be set up by universities to facilitate the development and management of JD projects. Such courses could encompass several complementary skills, such as proposal writing, communication and presentation, project management and JD best practices.

2.1.4. Practical suggestions

Participants highlighted the following measures as suggestions to facilitate the preparation phase:

- expansion and reinforcement of scientific networks to facilitate consortium-building processes;
- early involvement of administrative, legal and human resources units;
- early involvement of local Doctoral Schools;
- early contact with relevant MSCA DN National Contact Points;
- integration of the project proposal within existing institutional and international structures (EUAs, Doctoral Schools or other pre-existing JDs);
- development and maintenance of institutional knowledge (e.g. preparing and archiving internal memos, producing information sheets on specific JD/PhD requirements, supervision practices and joint governance, and making available pre-existing agreements/templates concerning JDs);
- setting up of JD-specific training for principal investigators and coordinators by JD Alumni/Mentors (organised, for example, by universities);

regular EJD/JD days or JD experience exchange workshops with alumni and existing networks to share best practices and discuss future approaches.

2.2. During the project – implementation of the action

The implementation phase was identified as the stage where the complexity of JDs becomes particularly visible. While many challenges originate during proposal preparation, they tend to materialise and intensify during project execution.

During this breakout session, participants focused the discussion on the following topics:

- joint recruitment, supervision and monitoring,
- administrative agreements for joint, double or multiple degrees,
- thesis defence and diploma delivery,
- secondments and mobility requests,
- contribution of the non-academic sector,
- communication and coordination.

2.2.1. Joint recruitment, supervision and monitoring

JDs entail a joint governance structure, encompassing joint selection, recruitment, admission, supervision, monitoring, assessment and award.

First of all, joint selection, recruitment and admission requires balancing centralised procedures with institution-specific requirements. Administrative aspects such as visa procedures, employment conditions and enrolment rules can create delays and uncertainty, particularly for non-EU candidates.

During the discussions, participants stressed the importance of and appraised very positively the requirement to closely follow MSCA DN rules in order to achieve an open, transparent and merit-based recruitment process, in line with the European Charter for Researchers. In this context, strong coordination between project management and institutional administration is essential to ensure alignment concerning recruitment and enrolment processes.

Joint supervision and monitoring remains a defining feature of JDs, but also a source of complexity. Differences in supervision culture and practices, as well as in monitoring tools and requirements, can lead to inconsistencies and require increased coordination efforts. In addition, while some organisations can adapt easily to such requirements, others may struggle with formalities, for example when the national regulations do not take into account interdisciplinary research. This can have adverse effects during the implementation of scientific activities, in

particular when it comes to planning secondments and organising interdisciplinary activities.

Participants highlighted the importance of clearly defined roles, expectations and communication mechanisms. Regular interaction among supervisors is essential to ensure coherent guidance for doctoral candidates. Furthermore, it was emphasised that successful supervision cannot rely solely on project-level measures, but university-wide frameworks, in terms of supervision policies and training requirements, can be helpful and ensure consistent quality.

For this reason, the MSCA supervision guidelines were frequently referenced as a useful tool that should be adopted at the institutional level (rather than just for the implementation of a specific project) and participants confirmed that they can facilitate the implementation of JDs.

2.2.2. Administrative agreements for joint, double or multiple degrees

Negotiating administrative agreements during implementation remains a major challenge. While pre-agreements can be put in place relatively smoothly, in part because they are based on templates provided in relevant calls for proposals, the development and signature of administrative agreements is often time-consuming due to legal and procedural differences across institutions.

Participants reported that timelines are frequently underestimated and that several projects experienced delays in finalising these agreements. In theory, signed administrative agreements should be bundled together and uploaded as a deliverable within six months of the launch of a JD project, but this is often difficult to achieve. In order to facilitate the development and signature of the administrative agreements, a suggested template, which shall be considered neither as exhaustive nor as mandatory, has been developed and included in this document (see Annex 4).

Among the difficulties reported, participants noted that it is sometimes a challenge to identify the right administrative persons in the university and get them to commit to the project due to excessive workloads, the requirement in some cases to have documents translated, the need for in-depth legal checks, complex and multilevel approval processes, and the unavailability in some institutions of the means to provide electronic signatures.

Limited institutional awareness and insufficient or late involvement of administrative actors were identified as key factors contributing to frequent delay and difficulties.

Regardless of this consideration, however, participants suggested that the deadline for the submission of signed administrative agreements should be

extended, particularly now that the maximum duration of JD projects has been extended to 60 months.

Potential measures to mitigate this issue consist in involving administrative units as soon as possible, possibly even before the official launch of the project. The provision of an official EU template or guidelines for the development and signature of administrative agreements could also help with this exercise. Such guidance would allow participants to plan their negotiations in advance based on clearer expectations and would reduce the number of variables to be considered in the context of a programme still characterised by a variety of protocols, with differences between countries, universities and PhD-specific regulations (e.g. pertaining to taught PhDs, structured PhDs, individual research PhDs, and lingual conventions and forms of examinations, such as disputation or *rigorosum*).

In any case, participants also stressed it was important that such templates or guidelines remain a flexible tool in the hands of consortia, rather than becoming a new legally binding instrument, in order to avoid introducing new constraints to project implementation.

Furthermore, the importance of involving at an early stage all relevant actors in the development of administrative agreements was repeatedly stressed. Investing in internal communication, creating dedicated teams for JD projects within universities and bringing together not only principal investigators but also managers, legal referents and administrative staff were deemed crucial for facilitating project implementation. The development and signature of administrative agreements for JDs should indeed not be seen as a project-related task but rather as a strategic activity for the entire institution.

The discussion did not touch upon the creation of a Consortium Agreement, as the template recommended under the framework of Horizon Europe and the MSCA (i.e. the DESCA – Development of a Simplified Consortium Agreement) is already considered a very good reference for the preparation of this document. Furthermore, this document provides a non-exhaustive, non-binding template that project teams can use to develop their Administrative Agreements (see Annex 4 of this report).

2.2.3. Thesis defence and diploma delivery

Significant variation in thesis defence procedures and diploma requirements was reported. Participants indicated that differences in committee composition, language requirements, degree-awarding procedures, degree ceremonies, certificate wordings and timescales can lead to difficulties or delays in project implementation.

Once again, the need to address and mitigate such issues early in the project life cycle to avoid complications at later stages was emphasised in the breakout sessions.

The gradual introduction of a European Degree (see Chapter 1 of this document), which is undergoing progressive testing, could help to address the obstacles posed by the many existing procedures concerning thesis defence and diploma delivery.

2.2.4. Secondments and mobility requirements

Secondments are widely recognised as a core component of the JD, but also as one of the most challenging elements, considering that fellows are required to study and work in at least two universities and should also collaborate with the non-academic sector (as in all DNs). For this reason, secondments in general, and industrial secondments in particular, pose a particular challenge, as the doctoral candidates must become familiar with two academic institutions and adapt to specific industrial environments within the limited duration of the PhD.

Furthermore, there are complex rules surrounding secondments, which can lead to administrative tensions. Different legal frameworks and taxation rules, visa applications and changing employment contracts can complicate the planning and execution of secondments. Visa application procedures in particular are becoming lengthier and more complicated, and, if not tackled early enough, they can severely disrupt the timeline of a project. To avoid further administrative tensions due to changing employment contracts, some projects use a single long-term contract for the entire duration of the PhD, rather than relying on multiple recruitments.

Finally, participants highlighted tensions between mobility requirements and the need to complete doctoral research within limited time frames. The workload of the average MSCA DN fellow is already considerable, because of the international and intersectoral character of the PhD studies, but it can become even more demanding in JDs, because of the double, joint or multiple PhD enrolment requirements. Once again, thorough planning of secondments, considering all relevant administrative, scientific and time constraints, is crucial for the success of a JD project.

2.2.5. Contribution of the non-academic sector

While engagement with non-academic organisations has improved in MSCA DN projects over the years, ensuring the commitment of non-academic hosts for secondments remains difficult. This can be explained by administrative or financial barriers, as well as by changes in management or economic conditions.

Participants highlighted that, to tackle this issue, some consortia adopt pragmatic approaches, such as sending fellows to university spin-offs or organisations closely linked to their recruiting beneficiary. This can sometimes help with the organisation of more tailored secondments, which can be crucial in JDs given the

greater time pressure to which fellows are exposed in comparison with traditional MSCA DN projects.

Despite these difficulties, the presence of non-academic organisations in JD consortia continues to be valued, as they can expose fellows to a greater variety of multidisciplinary and multisectoral experiences. For this reason, participants highlighted the need for more in-depth discussions with non-academic beneficiaries and partners from the very beginning of a project life cycle, in order to better clarify the expectations from non-academic organisations and secure their engagement in the project.

2.2.6. Communication and coordination

Effective communication was identified during the discussions as an overarching, cross-cutting success factor in JD projects. Institutional cultures and interpersonal dynamics can indeed significantly influence project implementation.

Participants stressed that fostering trust, openness and cooperation among partners is essential. While difficult to formalise, these elements play a decisive role in addressing administrative and organisational challenges.

2.2.7. Practical suggestions

The main measures suggested by participants to facilitate project implementation were the following:

- involvement of all relevant actors (scientific, managerial, legal and administrative) throughout all phases of project implementation;
- familiarisation with the European Charter for Researchers, especially during the recruitment phase;
- early clarification, set-up and signature of administrative agreements, to be developed, if possible, on the basis of a suggested template / guidelines provided by the EU;
- continuous monitoring of all project phases (JD alumni/mentors could help prevent common mistakes at the beginning of a project);
- establishment of clear co-supervision frameworks based on the MSCA supervision guidelines;
- careful planning of secondment and adjustment of related expectations, due to the time pressure characteristic of JDs;

- improved balance between project activities and doctoral research, to effectively manage fellows' workloads;
- strengthened engagement with non-academic partners;
- promotion of a culture of trust and cooperation;
- appointment of a dedicated officer in each institution for the handling of governance and bureaucratic aspects;
- development of standards, at the institutional level, for the training of supervisors;
- early training of teams in Doctoral Schools to deal with JD challenges (e.g. joint supervision) specific to local day-to-day practices.

2.3. After the project – sustainable changes and structuring effects

Participants widely agreed that JDs generate significant long-term benefits, but that their sustainability remains uncertain without continued support.

During the discussion, participants focused on the following points:

- long-lasting networks,
- long-lasting impacts,
- structuring effects.

2.3.1. Long-lasting networks

One of the key legacies of JD projects is alumni networks. According to participants, they tend to be a key driver of sustainability and can also contribute to the development of new projects. Former doctoral candidates should therefore be considered a vital asset in the long-term strategy of JD projects: even small investments in alumni engagement (e.g. via regular gatherings or online channels/tools) can generate long-term benefits.

Furthermore, participants stressed that structures such as the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) play an important role in maintaining connections and supporting continuity beyond the duration of a project. Developing strong links with organisations such as the MCAA is thus advised.

Finally, linking JD projects with relevant European initiatives such as the European Universities Alliances, and developing ways of cooperating with them, was mentioned as a potential way of securing and multiplying the structuring effects of projects.

2.3.2. Long-lasting impacts

JDs were found to contribute positively to the development of doctoral training practices. These developments include improvements in supervision, training structures and international cooperation. As such, JDs should not be perceived as one-off actions without the potential to produce structural changes.

However, participants noted that these innovations are not always systematically integrated into institutional frameworks: without deliberate efforts, their impact may remain limited to individual projects. Some barriers to the lasting impact of JD projects were considered to be due on occasion to (1) constraints arising from regional or national regulations, (2) Doctoral Schools not being willing to extend courses for interdisciplinary subjects, (3) excessive workload due to the extra administrative/coordination demands of joint/double/multiple degrees, (4) the difficulty of managing examinations of such degrees and (5) an insufficient number of PhD projects aligning on a joint research agenda.

The development and implementation of dedicated plans to integrate, coordinate and embed JD best practices and lessons learned in universities was thus highlighted as crucial to ensure long-lasting impacts.

2.3.3. Structuring effects on participating organisations and beyond

JDs were widely recognised to have a structuring effect on participating organisations. They contribute to strengthening doctoral schools, introducing new supervisory practices, evolving human resources policies, stimulating collaborations between faculties, improving internal coordination and fostering cross-institutional collaboration.

At the same time, the lack of continuous funding was identified by participants as a major risk factor. Without sustained support, many of the structures developed during projects are indeed at risk of being discontinued. This is particularly true when considering that many doctoral schools are not legal entities and therefore cannot apply for funding autonomously. This prevents them from sustaining JD structures, even when the academic and organisational benefits are clear.

Finding ways of ensuring at least some funding continuity was therefore deemed as crucial following completion of a project.

In addition, many participants asked for more precise guidance on available funding synergies. Some universities already explore national co-funding schemes or regional support, but information is fragmented. European-level support could help institutions navigate these opportunities and reduce barriers to the creation of long-lasting structures.

The structuring effect of JDs applies also to the cooperation between academic and non-academic organisations, which they can strengthen. In this case, however, developing ways of fostering cooperation beyond the boundaries of a project is even more crucial. Participants therefore highlighted the need to integrate, in the design of project frameworks, durable forms of engagement, which can include follow-up projects and long-term partnerships in addition to attempts to secure extra funding.

2.3.4. Practical suggestions

When it comes to structuring effects, participants identified the following suggestions to enhance them:

- maintain/extend agreements between members of consortia;
- establish formalised agreements for joint/double/multiple PhDs with universities outside the project consortium;
- develop funding mechanisms that extend beyond project duration;
- strengthen alumni networks and cooperation with the Marie Curie Alumni Association;
- integrate JD practices into institutional frameworks (e.g. include double/joint/multiple PhD options in the doctoral programmes offered by the university);
- ensure continued engagement with non-academic partners (e.g. encourage cooperation with spin-offs for non-academic engagement);
- participate in / align with long-term European initiatives and networks, such as the European Universities Alliances or other existing international structures (e.g. the Erasmus Mundus programme);
- maintain and share templates, tools and best practices.

3. Chapter 3 – Future directions and recommendations

3.1. Future directions and scenarios

3.1.1. Added value of Joint Doctorates

JDs have clear direct benefits for doctoral candidates, universities and employers. By pooling resources, universities can attract better candidates, gain more international visibility and increase their ability to develop strategic partnerships. Doctoral candidates have access to a larger portfolio of courses, expertise, infrastructure and intersectoral experience, which improves their academic (and potentially non-academic) outputs and their attractiveness to employers from both the academic and non-academic sectors.

Additionally, there is the strategic long-term importance of JDs to consider when viewed in the context of the overall EU strategies for growth, competitiveness and global attractiveness. JD programmes are ideal catalysts for structuring collaboration among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Consortia must establish joint operational procedures for recruitment, admission, supervision and evaluation of doctoral candidates. By doing so, and given the ripple effect on the participating HEIs, JDs can exert a positive structuring effect on participating partners, whereby the collaborative culture and the needed administrative flexibility gradually become the norm in those HEIs. As such, they contribute to building long-lasting collaborations and sustainable joint educational programmes and to raising the attractiveness of European doctoral programmes.

3.1.2. Challenges faced by Joint Doctorates

While the feedback received through the years from participants in MSCA JD projects confirmed the universal attractiveness of joint doctorates, it also highlighted significant obstacles to pursuing them. These obstacles are rarely of an academic nature but are rather administrative and legal, and are predominantly related to national, regional or institutional regulations, rules and cultures. Coordinators of JDs face a complex multitude of intertwining national/regional regulations and institutional rules that are not always compatible. These regard all steps of the doctoral candidate's journey from admission to thesis defence. Specifically, contrasting requirements were identified for admission procedures, development of JDs (e.g. compatibility of academic calendars and ECTS issues, especially concerning interdisciplinarity), accreditation, quality assurance and diploma format, defence, awarding and

recognition. This is complicated further in the case of non-EU candidates, where visa and immigration considerations become additional pieces of the puzzle.

Despite these obstacles, HEIs continue to actively and enthusiastically engage in JDs. This, in itself, and considering the obstacles cited, testifies to the importance they attach to JDs and therefore contributes to the high demand from doctoral candidates and ultimately from employers.

3.1.3. Current set-up of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Joint Doctorates and future directions

Despite their benefits and strategic importance, the number of applications for JDs in MSCA calls for proposals is lower than that for standard DNs. As outlined in the previous section, the set-up and implementation of joint programmes at the doctoral level remain quite challenging, raising concerns among project coordinators and prompting key actors, the MSCA included, to initiate and engage in a broad policy dialogue addressing respective challenges. Since higher education is a competence of the Member States, and given the autonomy of universities, the Commission has tried to increase participation in MSCA JDs by providing incentives, disseminating best practices and advocating to national governments and HEIs to make their requirements more compatible with JDs in general. However, those incentives and efforts did not result in a substantial increase in demand. Therefore, further reflection, and perhaps a different way of thinking, were needed.

Looking at the regulatory landscape of European universities with regard to JDs, some university combinations are easy, others are difficult and some are simply not possible (when the incompatibility is mandated by law). In the current MSCA JD set-up, all fellows participating in a given project must pursue JDs. This often presents institutional applicants with a dilemma. If, for example, nine pairs of the consortium partners could easily offer JDs, and only one pair has incompatible rules, then the consortium would be forced to apply for a standard DN rather than a JD. Accordingly, an increasingly credible line of thinking is to streamline the three types of MSCA DN into one blended type, whereby the consortium would be empowered to propose an assortment of doctoral types based on project needs and implementation realities.

3.1.4. Expected positive ripple effects from other European policy initiatives

Political momentum supporting structured transnational collaboration has been building in the EU, especially during the past five years. It is inevitable that such momentum and the associated initiatives and strategies would gradually dismantle parts of the existing barriers to pursuing JDs.

This momentum has culminated in several significant initiatives and political commitments. First were the European Commission's adoption of the European Strategy for Universities (2022) and the European Council's adoption of the Recommendation on Building Bridges for Effective European Higher Education Cooperation (2022). Both called for facilitating joint degrees and specifically for working towards establishing a joint European degree, including at the doctoral level. More recently, in 2025, the Council adopted a Resolution on a Joint European Degree Label, which is already in its implementation phase. At the same time, the number of University Alliances has been increasing (more than 60 at the time of writing), with the Alliances de facto acting as catalysts for transnational collaboration, including through JDs. Finally, among the various objectives of the upcoming legislative proposal for the European Research Area Act, JDs will be specifically addressed by urging the Member States to facilitate and provide flexibility for transnational JDs.

3.2. Recommendations for enhancing the implementation and impact of Joint Doctorates

The discussions held during the JDs event, together with the evidence collected through the survey, provided a set of policy recommendations aimed at facilitating implementation of JDs and maximising their impact. These recommendations address actors at the European, national (and federal, in some countries) and local (institutional stakeholders and JD project participants) levels, reflecting the multi-layered nature of the projects discussed and of their challenges.

3.2.1. Recommendations at the European level

Participants welcomed the European Commission's ongoing efforts to support JDs, particularly through the extension of project durations, removal of limits on secondment durations and development of the European Degree Label and the future European Degree. These initiatives were seen as important steps towards enhancing both the attractiveness and impact of JDs.

However, additional measures were identified as necessary in the following areas to enhance effectiveness.

3.2.1.1. Flexibility and guidance

- Extend timelines for administrative agreements: the current requirement to finalise and sign agreements within the first six months is too strict given national and institutional procedural diversity.

- Develop clearer guidance and streamlined templates, particularly for administrative agreements (see Annex 4).

- Promote systematic use of existing expertise from past and ongoing JD projects, for example through regular International Doctorate days, workshops, JD days events or ‘JD mentors’ networks to exchange and further develop models of best practice.

3.2.1.2. Flexibility in degree models and language

- Design European initiatives to be frameworks and coordination tools rather than rigid, compulsory structures to avoid conflicts with academic autonomy.

3.2.1.3. Funding and synergies

- Foster further supporting measures for JDs as they are strategically important and academically valuable.

- Ensure sustained support to the network of MSCA national contact points and the Marie Curie Alumni Association, as they are effective frameworks for facilitating the development of JDs. Their long-term, structural cooperation models can also support the alignment of rules and procedures across institutions, ease coordination during project implementation and enhance sustainability beyond the project duration.

- Further support European University Alliances as a very helpful basis to establish common rules and procedures within the participating universities and at partnering organisations. They also provide a good basis for a proposal, facilitate collaboration during the project between universities but also within the various departments/administrative functions of a participating university, and guarantee sustainability after a JD project.

- Further develop funding instruments for testing and implementing international PhD Labels outside MSCA JD networks to foster and develop concrete experiences and practices in the further establishment of a European Doctorate.

- Provide clearer guidance on funding synergies between the European, national and regional levels to reduce fragmentation and avoid duplication of efforts.

3.2.2. Recommendations at the national level

National governments and funding bodies play a critical role in reducing administrative barriers and fostering alignment. Relevant recommendations are listed in the following subsections.

3.2.2.1. Harmonisation of regulations

- Simplify and align national regulations where possible to lower administrative burdens associated with JDs, particularly concerning the recognition of joint degrees, credit transfer mechanisms, supervision and examination procedures.
- Encourage mutual recognition agreements between countries to facilitate cross-border doctoral training.

3.2.2.2. Funding alignment and incentives

- Promote better coordination between national and European funding schemes to ensure complementarity and avoid overlaps.
- Introduce national incentives for institutions engaging in JD projects to enhance participation and sustainability.

3.2.2.3. Support for intermediate structures

- Strengthen the role of National Contact Points for MSCA by providing targeted training on JD implementation and facilitating networking between institutions and European stakeholders.
- Encourage participation in transnational structures (e.g. European Universities Alliances) to foster long-term collaboration.

3.2.3. Recommendations for universities and other organisations

Institutions must adopt a holistic, coordinated approach to successfully implement JDs, addressing scientific, administrative, legal and managerial dimensions, as detailed in the recommendations below.

3.2.3.1. Strengthening Doctoral Schools

- Empower centralised Doctoral Schools, accounting for the range of models that exist in many European universities, as key mediators between European standards, national regulations and internal university practices. They can set up dedicated approaches (such as supervision and mentoring guidelines) and provide support for doctoral researchers from all faculties. They can also facilitate the adoption of concrete and specific practices within the universities and the various partnering bodies.

- Provide targeted JD training for doctoral school staff on administrative procedures and joint supervision.

- Integrate JD requirements with existing PhD regulations (e.g. structured PhDs, oral examinations, linguistic conventions) to ensure compatibility.

3.2.3.2. Capacity building and training

- Expand training opportunities for all actors involved in JD projects (e.g. supervisors, project managers, legal staff and administrative personnel) to reach the high level of expertise required by the complexity of JDs. These training opportunities could include:
    - scientific supervision/co-supervision, taking advantage of the MSCA supervision guidelines, which could be more widely promoted and integrated into institutional practices;
    - project management;
    - legal and administrative compliance.

- Integrate JD-specific modules into existing professional development programmes for academic and administrative staff.

3.2.3.3. Recognition and incentives

- Formally recognise and valorise the workload associated with JD coordination (e.g. for principal investigators, project managers) through:
    - career recognition and advancement opportunities;
    - appropriate incentives.

- Promote JD engagement in institutional strategies (e.g. internationalisation plans, excellence initiatives).

3.2.3.4. Support structures and knowledge-sharing

- Leverage existing networks (e.g. European Universities Alliances, MSCA National Contact Points, Marie Curie Alumni Association) to facilitate JD implementation.
- Establish peer-learning platforms, such as:
  - dedicated JD days events;
  - mentoring schemes involving experienced coordinators;
  - ad hoc JD mentor networks to disseminate best practices.
- Promote systematic use of existing expertise from past and ongoing JD projects to reduce the learning curve for new consortia.
- Integrate JD-specific modules into existing professional development programmes for academic and administrative staff.

3.2.3.5. Long-term collaboration frameworks

- Embed JDs within broader institutional partnerships, such as European Universities Alliances, Erasmus Mundus programmes and other joint educational structures, enhancing in this way not only the sustainability but also the long-term impact of JDs.
- Develop JDs as part of long-term structural cooperation rather than stand-alone projects.

3.2.4. Recommendations for projects participants

Individuals directly involved in JD implementation, including coordinators, supervisors and administrative staff, require tailored support to navigate challenges effectively. Relevant recommendations are outlined below.

3.2.4.1. Beyond project coordination and awareness

- Involve all relevant stakeholders from the outset, including:
  - scientific (supervisors, doctoral candidates);

- administrative (doctoral school staff, international offices);
- legal (compliance officers, contract specialists);
- managerial (project coordinators, finance teams).

3.2.4.2. Workload and role clarity

- Distribute responsibilities equitably within consortia to prevent over-reliance on a few individuals (e.g. principal investigators, project managers).
- Define clear roles for all partners (i.e. lead institution versus supporting institutions) to avoid misunderstandings.

3.2.4.3. Training and skill development

- Participate in JD-specific training (e.g. workshops on cross-border supervision, legal compliance, cultural awareness).
- Leverage existing resources, such as:
  - MSCA supervision guidelines;
  - peer-learning platforms (e.g. JD mentor networks);
  - online toolkits for administrative and financial management;
  - relevant templates (e.g. for pre-agreement letters or consortium agreements).

3.2.4.4. Communication and conflict resolution

- Establish regular communication channels (e.g. virtual meetings, shared platforms) to ensure transparency and swift problem-solving.
- Develop contingency plans for common challenges (e.g. delays in administrative approvals, conflicts between supervisors).

3.2.4.5. Sustainability and legacy

- Document lessons learned throughout the project to contribute to best practice repositories.

- Engage with alumni networks (e.g. the Marie Curie Alumni Association) to share experiences with future JD participants and foster long-term professional connections.
- Explore follow-up collaborations (e.g. joint publications, new project proposals) to maintain momentum when funding ends.

3.2.4.6. Multilingual and cultural sensitivity

- Adopt inclusive language policies (e.g. multilingual diplomas, translation support) where appropriate.
- Promote cultural awareness training to facilitate smooth collaboration in diverse consortia.

4. Chapter 4 - Overall conclusions and action plan

The discussions on exchanges of experience, good practices and lessons learned confirm that JDs are relevant and provide considerable benefits for doctoral candidates. They also raise the international profile of host institutions, an important benefit for universities as it improves their opportunities to secure funding in an increasingly competitive environment. Finally, they are important strategic instruments for the EU as they strengthen European collaboration in doctoral training, enriching both the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area. For these reasons, they remain popular among applicants. At the same time, their implementation remains complex and resource intensive.

From the discussion during the JDs cluster event, five overarching messages emerged.

- Early and inclusive preparation is essential, particularly the involvement of administrative and institutional actors.
- Implementation requires a certain degree of flexibility and also strong coordination and communication, especially with regard to supervision, mobility and secondments, which are practically challenging to coordinate.
- The involvement of industry partners can be difficult to secure but remains an important source of added value for all participants during a JD project and broadens career opportunities for PhD fellows after the project ends.
- European guidelines, templates and tools facilitating the development and implementation of projects are welcomed, as are the key principles of the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area, such as academic freedom and institutional autonomy, which must be considered in the implementation of JDs.
- Sustainability remains a key challenge without continuous funding. For this reason, plans should encompass project legacies and institutional memory, as well as strategic contacts and cooperation with existing networks and policies, such as the European degree label and the European Degree, the Marie Curie Alumni Association and the European Universities Alliances.

These findings point to the need for a balanced approach combining guidance and flexibility, as well as stronger alignment between project-level practices and institutional frameworks. They also underline the importance of linking JDs with broader European initiatives to maximise their long-term impact.

In terms of recommendations, the successful implementation of JDs requires a multi-layered, coordinated approach involving:

- European-level support;
- national engagement and increased compatibility;
- institutional capacity building and coordination across different initiatives;
- reliable networks and funding availability;
- individual empowerment.

By addressing structural, operational and cultural challenges through these recommendations, the potential of JDs as instruments for high-quality, collaborative doctoral training in Europe can be fully realised.

While Chapters 2 and 3 of this report detail the many recommendations and examples of good practices emerging from the 2025 JDs cluster event, this chapter focuses on a few recommendations that are concrete, actionable and realistic in the short to medium terms.

Two specific policy recommendations have been identified.

(1) Encourage Member States and Horizon-Europe-associated countries to adapt and better communicate the national legislation governing JDs. Participants in the JDs cluster event advocated for national authorities to grant flexibility to universities when setting the requirements for JDs. There are cases in which it is not clear what is mandated by national authorities versus by the institutions, which indicates the need for relevant bodies to provide clarity.

(2) Maintain the dialogue and synergy between the MSCA DNs and the European Degree Label as it continues to materialise. The same applies to the European degree as it develops. This synergy would pave the way for taking down considerable barriers to structured transnational collaboration in higher education, which would de facto address several of the JD barriers.

In addition, five action-specific recommendations were proposed.

(1) Provide information through seminars and information days. The JDs cluster event revealed a clear deficit in information at several levels. Programme coordinators struggle to understand institutional, national and transnational requirements, doctoral candidates need more guidance on the rules for admission and recruitment, and universities' administrative offices often lack familiarity with JDs.

(2) Establish and enable a network of former and current coordinators of JDs. The survey and associated cluster event clearly demonstrated the added value that a network of programme coordinators would bring. Towards the end of a JD project, a coordinator will have accumulated valuable experience on how to tackle administrative obstacles and ease project implementation. There is clear merit in passing this experience on to new coordinators.

(3) Organise a coordinators' day for each call for proposals. While emphasis is given to informing project representatives about the provisions of the Grant Agreement and the corresponding rights and obligations, coordinators' days could also serve as an opportunity for networking between the new coordinators and with REA Project Officers.

(4) Publish a new JDs report. Participants indicated that an EU document capable of guiding them through the preparation, implementation and follow-up of JD projects, with practical suggestions, templates and useful links and resources, would represent a valuable tool. This report was developed to address this request.

(5) Organise a further JDs cluster event. After the events organised in 2021 and 2025, another dedicated event could be considered during the implementation of the next EU Framework Programme, to take stock of relevant developments and address potential new challenges.

Annex 1 – Useful links for Joint Doctorate projects

Networks

European Universities Alliances: https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities-initiative/map.

Marie Curie Alumni Association: https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu/.

MSCA Matchmaking Platform: https://www.b2match.com/e/radiance-msca.

National Contact Points database: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp.

European Degree and European Degree Label

Erasmus+ policy experimentation projects selected for piloting a European Degree Label: https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-01/Selected_projects_pilot_call_joint_European_degree_label.pdf.

European Degree: https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/joint-european-degree/working-towards-a-joint-european-degree.

Report on the final outcomes of the Erasmus+ policy experimentation projects piloting a European Degree Label: https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD(2024)291&lang=en.

Results of the forum on the European Degree held on 20 and 21 November 2025: https://education.ec.europa.eu/event/european-degree-forum-2025.

Other relevant policy initiatives

Choose Europe for Science: https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/actions/choose-europe-for-science.

European Education Area: https://education.ec.europa.eu/.

European Higher Education Area: https://ehea.info/.

European Research Area: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/our-digital-future/european-research-area_en.

European Universities Initiative: https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities-initiative.

Union of Skills: https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/union-skills_en.

Past surveys, reports and events on EJDs / JDs

2022 JD guidelines report (previous edition of this document), based on the survey and cluster event held in 2021: https://rea.ec.europa.eu/publications/european-joint-doctorate-cluster-event_en.

Web page of the MSCA Doctoral Networks 2024 Coordinators' Information Day, which includes the JDs cluster event held on 13 November 2025: https://research-innovation-community.ec.europa.eu/events/5qk4O2l4MQt95A0OlYrXi/overview.

MSCA projects: innovative dimension and added value

Community Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS) web page, where projects supported by European funds (including those under the MSCA) can be found: https://cordis.europa.eu/.

Study on the added value of MSCA doctorates: https://open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu/articles/6-227/v1.

Study on the innovative dimension of MSCA projects: https://rea.ec.europa.eu/news/new-study-confirms-innovative-dimension-msca-innovative-training-networks-while-offering-2023-11-03_en.

Guidelines and templates

Development of a Simplified Consortium Agreement template: https://www.desca-agreement.eu/desca-model-consortium-agreement/.

European Charter for Researchers: https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/hrexcellenceaward/european-charter-researchers.

MSCA Green Charter: https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/green-charter.

MSCA guidelines on supervision: https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/guidelines-on-supervision.

Annex 2 – 2025 Joint Doctorates cluster event agenda

JD Coordinators' Information Day and Cluster Event

Thursday 13 November 2025 (via videoconference)

Agenda (all times in Central European Summer Time)

14:00–14:40 Opening plenary session

14:00–14:10 Opening – Filippo Gagliardi and Laurence Marrama-Rakotoarivony, REA JD referents

14:10–14:20 The future of MSCA JDs and the European degree – Sohail Luka, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

14:20–14:30 JD lessons learned – ORGestra and ReBond projects

14:30–14:40 Q&A

14:40–16:40 Parallel sessions in breakout rooms (two groups discussing the same topics) (*)

Group 1	Group 2
Moderator: Filippo Gagliardi	Moderator: Laurence Marrama-Rakotoarivony
Rapporteur: Iwan-Michelangelo D'Aprile	Rapporteur: Alexander Hasgall

14:40–15:20 Project implementation (during the project)

15:20–15:30 Coffee break

15:30–16:00 Structuring effects (after the project)

16:00–16:30 Project design (before the project)

16:30–16:40 Coffee break

14:40–16:40 Closing plenary session

16:40–16:55 Main conclusions of the parallel sessions (rapporteurs) and discussion

16:55–17:00 Wrap-up and next steps (REA JD referents)

(*) Participants were split into two groups to facilitate the discussion. REA JD referents presented the goals of the session and relevant inputs collected via the EJD/JD survey. The rapporteurs wrote the minutes of the discussions and presented a summary of their outcomes during the closing plenary session.

Annex 3 – Survey questions and outcomes

Survey questions

Introduction / Opening questions

- Project acronym or number
- Role in the project
- Organisation

Proposal preparation

Issue 1 – Proposal preparation/interest for double/joint/multiple PhD degrees

Questions addressed to: Project coordinators, Project managers, Supervisors

In terms of EJD or JD proposal preparation:

- Did you participate in the preparation of the proposal?

If the answer was yes, what were the main reasons for you to develop and submit an EJD/JD proposal (pick the 3 most important reasons)?

- Attract top PhD candidates
- Offer better career opportunities for doctoral candidates
- Collaborate in a structured way in higher education
- Improve the quality of the training programmes and supervision
- Raise the international profile of my institution
- Build long-lasting research networks
- Creating the conditions to receive a European quality label
- Working towards the creation and issuing of European Degrees
- Other, please specify

In addition to the usual requirements of a proposal for MSCA funding, preparing an EJD/JD proposal implies ensuring that fellows can obtain joint, double or multiple degrees.

- What are the three main difficulties you have encountered to develop an EJD/JD proposal?
  - The identification and inclusion of the minimum number of PhD institutions in the consortium (i.e. at least 3 PhD delivering institutions with minimum 2 of them located in EU member states or associated countries)

- The obtention of pre-agreement letters demonstrating the commitment of PhD delivering institutions to award such degrees
- Ensuring that fellows' projects comply with the PhD institutions' requirements (training, secondment …)
- The description of the joint governance structure enabling the joint admission, selection, supervision of the fellows, as well as the monitoring and assessment of their progress
- The decision to opt for double/multiple or joint degrees
- Other, please specify

- What are the main solutions/lessons learnt to overcome such issues?
  - You already had a network that served as a basis for the composition of the consortium
  - You used specific tools/means to identify potential members of the consortium. If so, please specify
  - You had already templates/guidelines for the development of pre-agreement letters in your organisation or in your associated PhD delivering institution
  - You have created standard/templates for the development of pre-agreement letters for the proposal
  - You were member of a Universities Alliance
  - You had already established (some) lasting agreements with other PhD delivering entities ensuring joint compliance of PhD requirements
  - You had already established procedures/guidelines to ensure full compliance of the PhD requirements in different PhD delivering institutions
  - You, or a member of your network, had already developed templates/guidelines fully or partially covering the development of the joint governance structure (joint admission, selection, supervision, monitoring and assessment procedures)
  - Other, please specify
- What kind of practical support you would like to get from the EU when it comes to the preparation of an EJD/JD proposal?
  - Templates/guidelines for the development of pre-agreement letters
  - The possibility to receive a European label for your PhD degree certifying its quality at the European level
  - The possibility to directly opt for a European degree (i.e. a new type of degree awarded after transnational programmes, automatically recognised everywhere in the EU, issued jointly and on a voluntary basis by a group of universities across Europe and based on a common set of criteria agreed at European level)
  - Guidance documents/examples of solutions/good practices for the preparation of an EJD/JD proposal
  - Other, please specify

Question for ESRs/DCs only

- Why did you apply for a double/joint/multiple PhD?
  - You selected it because you find a double/joint/multiple PhD more interesting than a traditional PhD
  - You were interested in both a traditional and a double/joint/multiple PhD, but you selected the latter because of the topic/research team/university
  - You were interested in both a traditional and a double/joint/multiple PhD, but you were selected only for the latter
  - You selected a double/joint/multiple PhD because you were advised to do so. If so, please specify who gave you this advice
  - Other, please specify

Issue 2 – Difficulty setting up an EJD/JD project or involving experts from specific fields/the non-academic sector

Questions addressed to: Project coordinators, Project managers, Supervisors

- Did you experience difficulties to include in the consortium participants from specific research domain/areas or from the non-academic sector?

If the answer is “Yes”:

- What were the affected research or non-academic fields?

- What kind of issues did you experience?
  - Difficulty to find potential researchers in the areas addressed by the project
  - Difficulty to find potential non-academic teams/organisations in the fields addressed by the project
  - Difficulty to get a formal commitment or formalise a collaboration with researchers in the areas addressed by the project
  - Difficulty to get a formal commitment or formalise a collaboration with non-academic teams/organisations in the fields addressed by the project
  - Difference in practices between your organisation and other organisations active in the fields targeted by the project
  - Difference in cultural environments between your organisation and other organisations active in the fields targeted by the project
  - Lack of available infrastructures in the EU in the areas addressed by the project
  - Limited hosting capacity of the organisations active in the fields targeted by the project
  - Other, please specify
- How have you addressed these issues?
  - You could not address these issues
  - You used the knowledge/resources of your network
  - You relied on other tools/solutions, please specify
  - You developed dedicated agreement templates/guidance documents

- The non-academic organisations in your consortium only host secondments
- The non-academic organisations in your consortium were involved for training courses only
- Other, please specify

Project implementation

Issue 3 – Copying with different University PhD regulations

Questions addressed to: Project coordinators, Project managers, Supervisors

In terms of project implementation, the signature of the administrative agreements for the issuing of double/joint/multiple degrees is often a difficult point.

- How long did it take in your project to sign these agreements, considering the time required from the very beginning of the process?
  - The quickest agreement: Please indicate the number of months
  - The longest agreement
  - On average

- What are the five main barriers you have encountered when signing these agreements?
  - Minimum time to be spent by fellows at the premises of each PhD delivering entity
  - Composition of the doctoral committee
  - Too many compulsory courses to be attended by fellows to obtain the required ECTs at each PhD delivering entity
  - Different scoring system and requirements for the issuing of PhDs (number of papers, papers submitted/accepted/published, rules for the attribution of credits – ECTs…)
  - Teaching requirements
  - IPR considerations
  - Design and composition of the thesis documents
  - Review/correction process by external experts (before/after defence)
  - Organisation of the oral defence (e.g. double defence required, language of the defence …)
  - Designation of the title and composition of the diploma
  - Different cost structure of PhD paths/studies across different universities
  - Additional requirements stemming from different national legal frameworks
  - Lack of standards for the development of the signed administrative agreements to establish a Joint/Double/Multiple Doctorate

- Lengthy authorisation/signature processes of the administrative agreements within universities
- Other (please specify)

The join selection and recruitment of fellows is frequently another difficult point.

- What are/were the three main challenges for the joint selection and recruitment of fellows in your project?
  - The identification of good candidates
  - The identification of the right supervisors/PIs/members of the selection committee
  - The transnational/multisectoral (i.e. academic and non-academic)/interdisciplinary nature of the recruitment effort
  - The management of the selection and recruitment process in parallel with the development of the administrative PhD agreements
  - The alignment between the recruitment requirements/rules of EU funding with administrative/national regulations
  - Visa/work permits procedures
  - Other (please specify)

- What are/could be the main solutions/lessons learnt to overcome these issues?
  - Creating standards/templates/guidelines for the development of signed administrative agreements
  - Establishing long-lasting networks of universities interested in delivering joint/double/multiple degrees in specific fields
  - Working towards a standardisation of administrative practices/requirements
  - Receiving endorsements at European level for joint initiatives/PhDs (e.g. a European quality label for joint, or high quality, activities/research/degrees)
  - Receiving dedicated guidance from EU Institutions for the establishment of joint initiatives (e.g. template documents for signed administrative agreements, hands-on guides on the establishment of joint/double/multiple degrees, relevant lessons learnt/best practices documents)
  - Other (please specify)

Question for ESRs/DCs only

- How was your experience with a double/joint/multiple PhD?
  - You found the workload to be manageable even if you were working with more than one university
  - You found the workload too challenging
  - Working with supervisors in different universities proved feasible
  - Working with supervisors in different universities represented an obstacle to the completion of your doctoral studies
  - Dealing with the procedures and requirements of different universities did not represent an issue thanks to the supervision/guidance you received

- Dealing with the procedures and requirements of different universities was an obstacle to the completion of your doctoral studies
- You believe that the PhD you worked on has more scientific value/created better career opportunities in comparison to a traditional PhD
- You believe that the PhD you worked on did not provide you with a specific added value in comparison to a traditional PhD
- Other, please specify

Issue 4 – Joint supervision arrangements

Questions addressed to: Project coordinators, Supervisors (both academic and non-academics), Fellows

The implementation or the joint supervision and the management of fellows' projects can be difficult too.

- What are the five main challenges concerning the joint supervision of fellows and joint monitoring of their progress in your project?
  - Different supervision culture/practice among different higher-education institutions
  - Identification of the right supervisors
  - Training of supervisors
  - Different monitoring tools/requirements among different higher-education institutions
  - Endorsement of joint supervision/monitoring process by the joint/double/multiple PhD delivering institutions
  - Excessive workload due to the extra administrative/coordination tasks needed to fulfil the joint supervision/monitoring requirements
  - Other (please specify)

- What are the three main challenges related to the management of fellows' projects, in terms of intersectoral/interdisciplinary aspects, training path and secondments?
  - Identification of adequate supervisors with the required interdisciplinary/intersectoral competencies
  - Training of supervisors
  - Identification and planning of relevant secondments and interdisciplinary/intersectoral activities
  - Management of the workload
  - Other (please specify)

- What are the main solutions/lessons learnt to overcome such issues?
  - Creating standards for joint supervision
  - Creating standards for the training of supervisors

- Establishing long-lasting networks of universities interested in delivering joint/double/multiple degrees in specific fields
- Working towards a standardisation of administrative practices/requirements
- Receiving endorsements at European level for joint initiatives (e.g. a European label for high quality practices)
- Receiving dedicated European guidance for the establishment of joint initiatives (e.g. hands-on guides on the management of joint/double/multiple degrees, relevant lessons learnt/best practices documents)
- Other (please specify)

Issue 5 – JDs incentives

Questions addressed to: Project coordinators, Project managers, Supervisors (both academic and non-academics), Fellows

JD projects have a higher level of complexity in comparison to traditional MSCA Doctoral Networks. To incentivise their implementation, ad-hoc rules have therefore been developed.

- Which of incentives represent the most important ones to facilitate the development of JDs?
  - The extension of their duration to 5 years (allowing the funding of fellows for up to 4 years)
  - The absence of limits to the duration of fellows' secondments
  - The possibility of having one of the double/multiple/joint PhD issuing organisations based neither in the EU nor in one of the Horizon Europe Associated Countries
  - None of them is enough to effectively incentivise the development of JDs

- From the launch of Horizon 2020 programme (in 2014), how do you think the situation has evolved for the design and delivery of double/multiple/joint degrees?
  - It is now easier to issue double/multiple/joint degrees thanks to the increased interest towards/acceptance of this type of degrees
  - It is now easier to issue double/multiple/joint degrees thanks to the existence of a more harmonised approach across universities
  - It is now easier to issue double/multiple/joint degrees thanks to the support available at European level (via MSCA JDs, the Erasmus+ programme, the Universities Alliances and/or the European Commission's blueprint for a European degree)
  - The situation is the same as in the past
  - It is now harder to issue double/multiple/joint degrees due to tighter national regulations

- It is now harder to issue double/multiple/joint degrees due to more stringent universities' policies
- It is now harder to issue double/multiple/joint degrees due to a decreased willingness to establish complex cooperation frameworks among universities
- Other (please specify)

- For the future, what are the incentives that should be created or should continue to apply to JDs to facilitate their design and implementation?
  - The extension of their duration to 5 years (allowing the funding of fellows for up to 4 years)
  - The absence of limits to the duration of fellows' secondments
  - The possibility of having one of the double/multiple/joint PhD issuing organisations based neither in the EU nor in one of the Horizon Europe Associated Countries
  - Providing JDs with the possibility of having a higher budget in comparison to standard MSCA DN projects
  - Requiring JDs to establish a link with an existing Universities Alliance (Universities Alliances are networks of higher education institutions linked by long-term structural, strategic and sustainable cooperation agreements aiming at increasing their competitiveness and promoting European values)
  - Requiring JDs to evolve into a new Universities Alliance
  - Providing JDs with the automatic possibility of issuing a European label, meaning that successful students will receive a European quality label together with their double/multiple/joint degree
  - Requiring JDs to evolve into permanent networks issuing European labels
  - Providing JDs with the automatic possibility of issuing a fully recognised European Degree (i.e. a new type of degree awarded after transnational programmes, automatically recognised everywhere in the EU, issued jointly and on a voluntary basis by a group of universities across Europe and based on a common set of criteria agreed at European level)
  - Requiring JDs to evolve into permanent networks issuing European Degrees
  - None of them
  - Other (please specify)

Follow-up

Issue 6 – Structuring effect

- Ensuring the sustainability of double/multiple/joint PhDs in universities after the end of an EJD/JD project is often difficult.

- What are the barriers for the sustainable delivery of double/multiple/joint PhDs beyond the project duration?
  - Lack of funding for such PhDs after the end of the project
  - Loss of experience when the supervisor(s) involved in the EJD/fellowsJD project move to other organisations outside the project consortium
  - Lack of commitment from project partners to continue with the delivery of such PhDs
  - Unwillingness to modify previously established doctoral programmes
  - Unwillingness to develop new doctoral programmes
  - Constraints in terms of regional or national regulations
  - Other, please specify

- What are the main solutions/lessons learnt to overcome such issues?
  - Apply for a new JD project
  - Maintain/extend the agreements between the members of the consortium
  - Include double/multiple/joint PhD options in the doctoral programmes of the university
  - Establish formalised agreements for double/multiple/joint PhDs with other universities beyond the boundaries of the consortium
  - Participate in Universities Alliances
  - Other, please specify

- Expectation of support from the EU to address this issue (open question)

Survey outcomes

Survey set-up and description of the respondents

Survey design

The survey aimed to gather insights on the primary obstacles, effective solutions and further support requirements that emerged in recent EJD and JD projects. The main findings were subsequently utilised to facilitate discussions during the JDs cluster event, particularly in breakout sessions.

The survey targeted all participants involved in EJD and JD projects funded since the 2019 call for proposals, with a specific focus on individuals responsible for project management and PhD fellow supervision. It also incorporated perspectives from PhD fellows recruited under these projects. Questions for managers and supervisors centred on three core themes: proposal preparation, project implementation, and incentives and lasting impact. PhD fellows were

queried on their motivations for applying and their experiences throughout the project.

An online survey was conducted between 3 June and 3 September 2025, distributed to coordinators, project managers, supervisors and PhD fellows, ensuring, among this latter group, balance in terms of gender and a maximum of diversity in the countries of origin represented.

Response overview

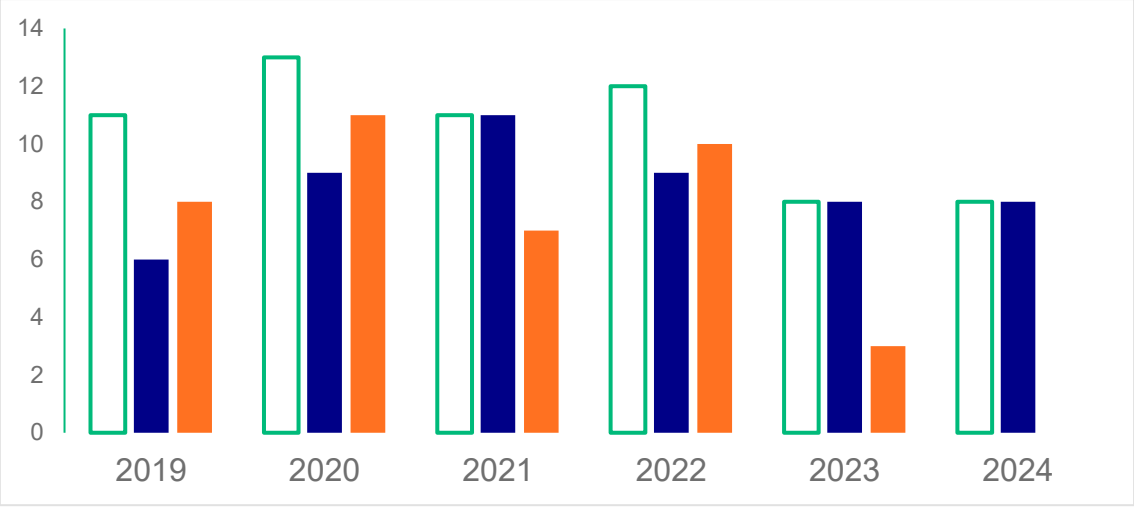
A total of 63 projects were targeted, all of which provided responses. Of these, 51 projects (81 %) included input from the support team, which comprises coordinators, supervisors and project managers, while 39 projects (62 %) featured responses from PhD fellows. Twenty-seven projects (43 %) provided contributions from both groups.

The survey collected 217 responses in total, averaging 4 responses per project. Support team members provided 78 responses, averaging 1.7 per project, whereas PhD fellows contributed 139 responses, averaging 5.1 per project. These averages exclude projects from the 2024 call, as they had not yet commenced at the time of the survey.

Distribution of responses by call and participant role

As presented in Figure 1, responses from the support team were gathered across all project calls. However, input from PhD fellows was lower for the 2023 call, as recruitment was still in its early stages at the time of the survey, and entirely absent for the 2024 call, as recruitment had not yet begun.

Figure 1: Total number of projects represented in responses (green) and number of projects with responses from support team members (blue) and PhD fellows (orange) by call year



In terms of roles (Figure 2) represented by the support team members who responded, coordinators, project managers and supervisors are represented for all call years, with the exception of project managers for the 2019 call. Meanwhile, in terms of location (Figure 3) of the support team members who responded, all countries most represented in the JD projects overall are represented here.

Figure 2: Number of responses from support team members by role and call year

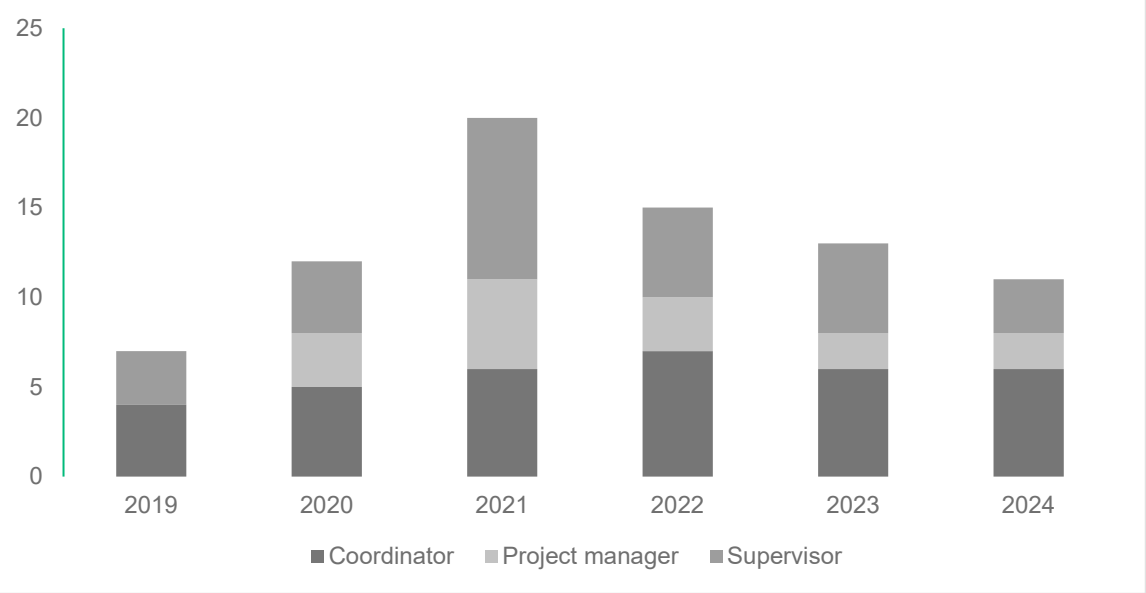
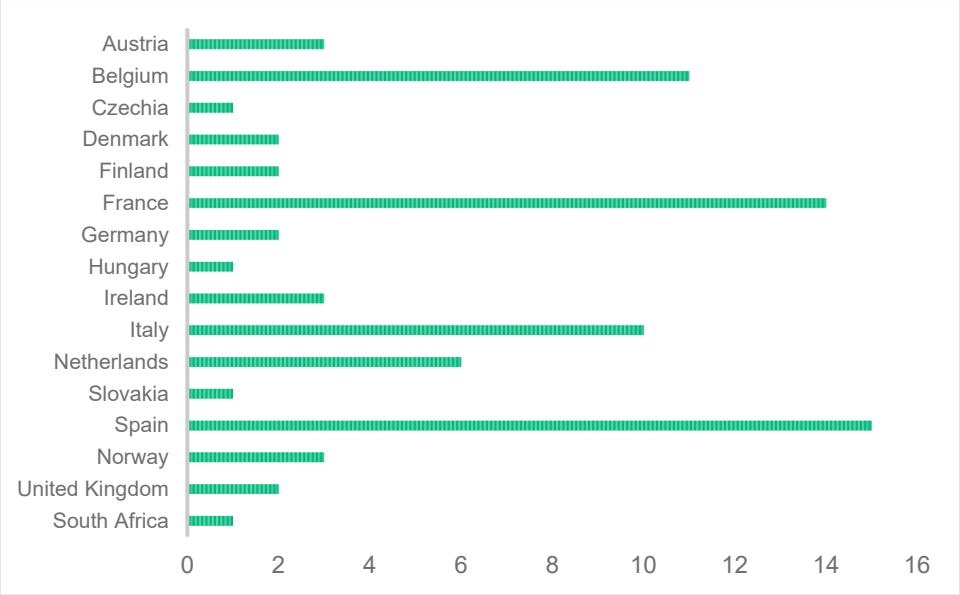


Figure 3: Number of responses from support team members by country



Joint doctorate proposal preparation

Motivation for participation

A total of 67 individuals from the support teams (86 % of respondents) were involved in proposal preparation, encompassing nearly all coordinators and supervisors, as well as 53 % of project managers, with increasing participation observed in more recent calls.

The primary motivations for opting to participate in a JD or EJD project were the opportunities to build lasting networks (70 %), enhance career opportunities for doctoral candidates (43 %) and attract high-level PhD candidates (40 %). Additional motivations included improving the quality of training programmes and supervision (37 %) and facilitating structured collaboration in higher education (30 %).

Key incentives driving participation included the introduction of four-year funded PhDs (since the 2023 call), the inclusion of PhD-issuing partners from non-EU countries (since the 2024 call), an increased allocation of person-months compared with standard DNs (applicable to JD projects in the 2021 and 2022 calls and, since then, also applicable to standard DNs) and a slightly higher success rate observed in the 2021 and 2022 calls.

Concerning the doctoral candidates, the most common reason they cite for applying to a joint or double PhD programme was the perception that it was more interesting than a traditional PhD (42 %). An additional 37 % were interested in both traditional and joint PhDs but ultimately chose the latter due to the research topic, team or university. A smaller proportion did not realise they were applying for a joint or double PhD (8 %), were interested in both but selected the joint programme because of the topic (7 %) or were advised to pursue this path by university professors or master's thesis supervisors (2 %).

Fellows frequently highlighted their interest in the proposed research topic as a decisive factor. Notably, the financial allowance was mentioned as a key motivation in only one response, despite some support team members considering it a major incentive for candidates.

Challenges in proposal preparation

The most significant difficulties encountered during proposal preparation pertained to ensuring the compliance of fellows' projects with the varying structures and requirements of PhD-issuing institutions (63 %) and navigating diverse national regulations, laws and policies governing doctoral education (60 %). Additional challenges included describing the joint governance structure (30 %) and obtaining pre-agreement letters (28 %).

Participants also highlighted difficulties in structuring the time fellows spend in different host institutions, including non-academic organisations, as well as securing adequate administrative support and reconciling universities' legal and administrative frameworks with the definitions of double degree agreements. The issue of identifying the minimum number of required PhD-issuing institutions was particularly emphasised in recent calls, notably by coordinators and supervisors.

Solutions for proposal preparation

For consortium composition, most participants (63 %) relied on existing networks as the foundation for their consortium, while 13 % chose to join a Universities Alliance. No respondents reported using specific tools or methods to identify potential consortium members.

In drafting the proposal, 43 % of respondents indicated that either they or another consortium member had prior experience in preparing EJD or JD proposals.

Regarding the development of pre-agreement letters, 37 % already possessed templates or guidelines, whereas 21 % created them specifically for the proposal. Only 18 % had established procedures or guidelines to ensure compliance with PhD requirements across institutions, although 34 % maintained lasting agreements with other PhD-issuing institutions.

For the joint governance structure, 28 % had access to templates or guidelines to facilitate its development.

Support needs for proposal preparation

The most frequently requested forms of practical support from the EU were templates or guidelines for developing pre-agreement letters (57 %), guidance documents or best practices for JD proposal preparation (45 %) and the opportunity to engage with other EJD or JD networks to exchange best practices (33 %). Guidance documents were particularly sought after by project managers, while coordinators emphasised the value of networking with other consortia, especially in recent calls.

Nearly 50 % of respondents expressed interest in the possibility of obtaining a European degree label for their PhD and/or the option to directly award a European degree, with 48 % supporting the former and 40 % the latter. The European degree label was more frequently favoured by project managers, whereas coordinators and supervisors showed greater interest in the European degree.

Inclusion of non-academic or underrepresented partners

Only 15 % of respondents reported difficulties in including partners from specific research domains or the non-academic sector, such as bioengineering firms, genetic companies and hospitals. The primary challenges included securing formal commitments, harmonising practices and limited hosting capacity. Additional issues stemmed from legal and regulatory constraints, short-term planning limitations, the risk of governance changes leading to withdrawal and the requirement for fellows to spend sufficient time in three host institutions and/or countries.

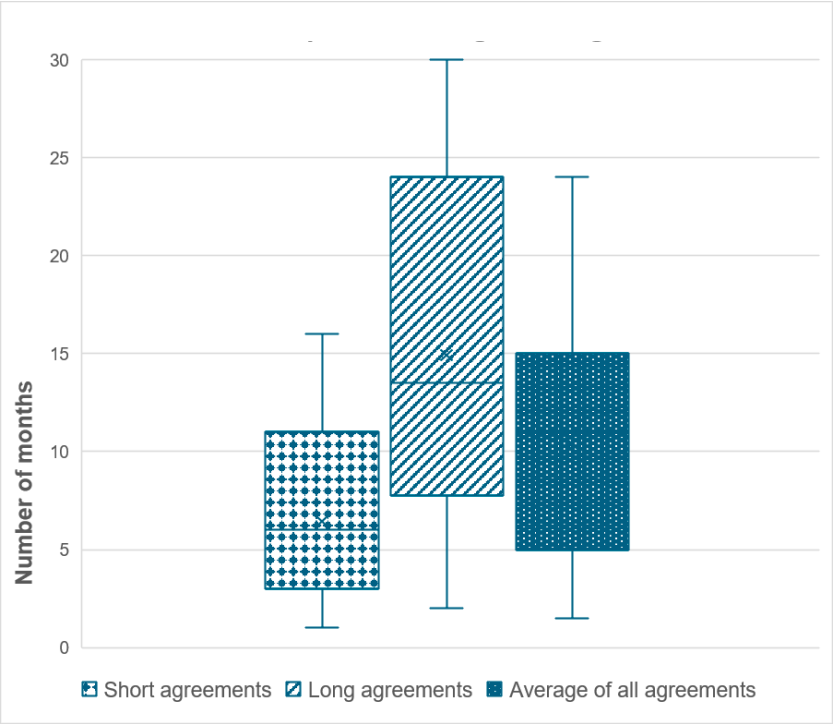
To address these challenges, consortia primarily leveraged existing network knowledge and resources, limited non-academic sector involvement to hosting secondments, secured a fourth year of funding for non-academic placements and developed dedicated agreement templates or guidance documents.

Joint doctorate project implementation

Time to final agreement signature

A total of 64 support team members (82 % of respondents) were involved in project implementation, with the remainder yet to commence their projects at the time of the survey. While 50 % of short agreement processes complied with the six-month target for signing joint or double PhD agreements, the remaining cases often exceeded this time frame, with the most complex agreements taking over two years to finalise (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Time taken to finalise signed PhD agreements



Key barriers to joint/double/multiple PhD agreements

The most significant barriers to implementing joint or double PhD agreements were administrative and legal issues. Most respondents (51 %) cited a lack of standardised administrative agreements, while 49 % encountered lengthy or difficult signature processes within universities. Additional requirements stemming from divergent national legal frameworks were mentioned in 40 % of the replies.

A second category of barriers related to establishing practical rules and was particularly emphasised by project managers. These included difficulties in organising oral defences (33 %), such as agreeing on the language of presentation or managing double defences, and reconciling different scoring systems and requirements (28 %), including a candidate's number of publications.

The third set of barriers involved timing and workload, with 33 % of respondents highlighting the minimum time fellows were required to spend at each PhD-issuing institution and 28 % noting the excessive number of compulsory courses at each institution.

Respondents provided further details on these challenges, categorising them into three primary issues.

(1) **'Burocrazy'.** Difficulties included identifying the appropriate administrative personnel within universities and securing their commitment, overwhelmed university services, the need for translations and legal checks in both institutions, multiple approval layers delaying signatures, uncertainty over authorised signatories and some universities not accepting electronic signatures.

(2) **Differences and incompatibilities between university rules.** Coordinators often had to navigate disparate degree ceremony protocols, leading to variations in certificate wording and dates, mismatched timelines and delays when associated partners were involved in the signature process.

(3) **Funding and budgetary constraints.** The standard 36-month duration was deemed insufficient, and institutional contributions within the funding allocation were considered too low.

Joint selection and recruitment issues

The primary challenges in implementing joint selection and recruitment of PhD fellows were visa and work permit procedures (60 %, noted in particular by project managers), identifying high-quality candidates (51 %), aligning EU funding recruitment requirements with national administrative regulations (33 %) and managing the selection and recruitment process in parallel with administrative joint/double/multiple PhD agreement preparations (25 %).

Additional issues included language proficiency requirements and, in some cases, an overwhelming number of applications received through Euraxess.

Solutions for agreement and selection

The most commonly proposed solutions to address agreement signature and selection challenges were standardising administrative practices and requirements across universities (64 %, advocated in particular by project managers), creating templates or guidelines for administrative agreements (54 %), accessing dedicated EU guidance for establishing joint initiatives (49 %) and obtaining European-level endorsements for joint PhDs (45 %). Forty-three per cent of respondents also supported the establishment of long-lasting university networks interested in delivering joint or double degrees in specific fields.

Further suggestions included implementing a centralised selection process with a common committee and appointing a dedicated officer in each institution to oversee governance and bureaucratic aspects.

Joint supervision issues

The foremost challenges in joint supervision were excessive workload due to additional administrative and coordination tasks (66 %, highlighted in particular by project managers), differences in monitoring tools and requirements across higher education institutions (49 %) and variations in supervision culture and practices (39 %). Several respondents (19 %), primarily coordinators and supervisors, noted a lack of endorsement for joint supervision and monitoring processes.

Additional comments pointed to difficulties in scheduling joint meetings.

Issues with PhD project monitoring

The two primary challenges in managing and monitoring PhD projects were workload management (73 %) and planning relevant secondments and interdisciplinary or intersectoral activities (55 %), both of which were more frequently cited by project managers.

Respondents provided further insights on these challenges.

(1) **Planning.** Difficulties arose in integrating industrial secondments with double PhD training requirements and research progress, as well as adapting secondment schedules to the individual progress of each PhD project. Some national regulations also failed to account for interdisciplinary research.

(2) **Funding for secondments.** Insufficient financial provisions posed additional constraints.

Solutions for supervision and monitoring

The most widely supported solutions for improving supervision and monitoring were standardising administrative practices and requirements across universities (58 %, with a slight increase in recent calls), establishing long-lasting networks of universities interested in delivering joint or double degrees (42 %, emphasised in particular by supervisors), accessing dedicated European guidance for joint initiatives (31 %, more frequently requested by project managers) and developing standards for joint supervision (30 %). A substantial proportion of the respondents (19 %) advocated for European-level endorsements of joint initiatives.

Although less commonly mentioned (1 %), the proposal to ‘create standards for the training of supervisors’ gained traction in recent calls, particularly among supervisors themselves.

Additional recommendations included the following.

(1) **For projects.** Initiate preparations early and consider delaying the official project start date. While the added value of secondments was acknowledged, the frequency of relocations should be limited.

(2) **For the funding body.** Simplify procedures for changes in associated partners and further extend PhD durations (a measure already implemented).

Respondents also noted that pluralism in supervision should be regarded as a strength rather than a challenge.

PhD fellows' experiences during the project

When asked to evaluate their PhD experience, 53 % of PhD fellows found the workload manageable, while 19 % considered it excessively challenging. Regarding collaboration with supervisors across different universities, it was more frequently positively appraised, with 48 % believing it enhanced the quality of their supervision, whereas 19 % viewed it as an obstacle to completing their PhD. In contrast, 50 % found that dealing with the procedures and requirements of multiple universities hindered the completion of their doctoral studies, with only 31 % reporting it was not an issue.

Additional feedback from fellows included criticisms of the overwhelming double volume of paperwork, the time consumed by bureaucratic matters both between and within universities, and the requirement to fulfil the complete workload for both institutions. Some also expressed concerns about excessively demanding mobility schemes, the limited time available to conduct research in each university, insufficient support for living arrangements and the substantial burden of immigration paperwork for non-EU citizens.

Added value of the joint or double PhD from the PhD fellows' perspective

PhD fellows identified several key benefits of pursuing a joint or double PhD. The richness of the research experience was the most frequently cited advantage, with 76 % appreciating the interdisciplinary nature of their projects and access to a broader range of topics, fields and institutions, and 62 % valuing access to expertise and resources from multiple institutions.

The reinforced international dimension was another significant benefit, with 67 % highlighting the opportunity to conduct research in universities across different countries and 35 % benefiting from international recruitment and mobility.

However, the longer-term impact of a joint or double PhD was less clear. Only 38 % believed their degree held greater value than a traditional PhD, 35 % appreciated the exposure to the non-academic sector, 33 % noted increased

visibility and recognition of their profile or CV, and 24 % felt it enhanced their employability and career opportunities.

Incentives and sustainable impact

Appreciation of the already implemented incentives

All 78 support team respondents provided feedback on recently implemented incentives. The extension of JD project duration to five years, including up to four years of funding for fellows, was the most widely appreciated incentive (85 %), particularly among supervisors. The removal of limits on the duration of fellows' secondments was important to 38 %, while support for the possibility of having one PhD-issuing institution based outside the EU or Horizon-Europe-associated countries showed an increasing trend in recent calls, with 24 % expressing support. Only 13 % of respondents were unconvinced by recent incentives, chiefly the supervisors (23 %, compared with 6 % of coordinators and 7 % of project managers).

Proposed new incentives

Proposed new incentives included increasing the budget for JD projects relative to standard DN projects (59 %), the automatic issuance of a European degree for successful JD candidates (37 %) and the automatic awarding of a European degree label (37 %). Fifteen per cent suggested encouraging the evolution of JDs into permanent networks issuing European Degrees / Labels.

Additional suggestions included the standardisation of European doctoral programmes, the designation of a 'major' and 'minor' institution to streamline regulatory compliance, extra management funding for smaller JDs and opportunities to renew networks to create postdoctoral positions for fellows.

Evolution of the situation between 2014 and 2024

Of the 72 opinions expressed on the evolution of joint and double PhDs over the past decade, 44 % perceived an improvement, citing increased interest in and acceptance of these degrees, enhanced support at the European level and a more harmonised approach across universities. Twenty-nine per cent believed the situation had remained the same, while 26 % felt it had deteriorated, attributing this to more stringent university policies, tighter national regulations and a declining willingness among universities to engage in complex collaborations.

An analysis by role of the respondents revealed that project managers held the most positive perception, followed by coordinators, while supervisors were the most critical. Variations were also observed by country, with respondents from Belgium, Spain, France, and Italy and reporting increased interest and harmonisation, though respondents from Ireland, France, Italy and Norway also noted more stringent university policies. Respondents from the Netherlands highlighted the importance of EU funding and policy support, whereas respondents from Austria and the United Kingdom emphasised the issues posed by tight national regulations.

Key barriers to sustainable impact

The primary barriers to sustainable impact beyond the project duration were lack of post-project funding (73 %), regional or national regulatory constraints (35 %), insufficient commitment from project partners to continue delivering such PhDs (26 %) and loss of expertise when participants transitioned to organisations outside the consortium (22 %).

Additional challenges cited included the substantial effort required to prepare strong applications, doctoral schools' reluctance to extend courses for interdisciplinary subjects, excessive administrative and coordination workloads, difficulties in managing examinations and an insufficient number of PhD projects aligning with joint research agendas.

Proposed solutions for sustainable impact

The most widely supported solutions for ensuring sustainable impact were maintaining or extending agreements between consortium members (47 %), applying for new JD projects (45 %), integrating joint or double PhD options into universities' doctoral programmes (40 %), establishing formalised agreements with universities outside the project consortium (29 %) and participating in University Alliances (15 %).

Respondents proposed further measures at both the European and EU funding levels.

- **At the European level.** Harmonise the acceptance of PhD training across the EU (e.g. automatic recognition of requirements if fulfilled at one of the two universities) and promote engagement from university leadership to highlight the value of these programmes to governance bodies.
- **At the EU funding level.** Allow fellows to transition to local PhDs at their home university if necessary, provide complementary funding or economic incentives beyond the five-year duration and increase funding for institutional contributions, which were often deemed insufficient for the particularly high workload associated with JD implementation.

Annex 4 – Joint Doctorates administrative agreement template

1. Title

Agreement for the award of a Joint/Double/Multiple Doctoral Degree

2. Parties

This agreement is entered into between:

- Full legal name of Institution A
  Address:
  Represented by:
  (hereinafter the 'home institution')
- Full legal name of Institution B
  Address:
  Represented by:
  (hereinafter the 'partner institution')
- Full name of PhD candidate
  Date of birth:
  Nationality:
  (hereinafter the 'PhD candidate')
- Additional people to be involved (to be customised based on the project)

Collectively referred to as 'the parties'.

3. Legal framework

This agreement is established in accordance with:

- applicable national legislation governing doctoral studies in each country;
- institutional regulations of each partner;
- relevant EU frameworks (Consortium Agreement, Horizon Europe Grant Agreement and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Joint Doctorates rules).

4. Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to:

- establish relevant joint supervision mechanisms leading to the award of joint/double/multiple doctoral degrees (correct option to be selected);

- define the conditions for the award of a joint/double/multiple doctoral degree (correct option to be selected);
- ensure that potential incompatibilities are identified and addressed.

5. Selection and enrolment

- The PhD candidate must be jointly selected by both/all PhD-awarding institutions.
- The PhD candidate must be enrolled at both/all institutions for the duration of the PhD.

6. Duration

- Duration of the PhD:_____.
- Start date(s): _____.
- Expected completion date(s): _____.

Extensions may be granted subject to approval by both/all institutions.

7. Research project

- Thesis title: _____.
- Research project description: _____.

8. Supervision for the award of the PhD

The PhD candidate shall be jointly supervised by:

- PhD-awarding institutions (one entry per institution):
  Institution and department: _____;
- supervisor(s):
  Name, position: _____;
- additional organisations involved (to be customised).

Description of the supervisors' work methodology (selection, enrolment, supervision, monitoring, communication and coordination).

9. Mobility

- Mobility schedule at the home institution:

- minimum duration: _____;
- expected physical presence: _____;
- remote work rules, if relevant: _____.

- Mobility schedule at the partner institution:
  - minimum duration: _____;
  - expected physical presence: _____;
  - remote work rules, if relevant: _____.
- Additional organisations to be involved (to be customised based on the project).

10. Training and progress monitoring

- The PhD candidate must:
  - participate in doctoral training activities;
  - complete required courses / collect credits;
  - undergo regular progress evaluations, such as annual reviews, and including of the thesis progress and of the Career Development Plan.

Progress reports may be developed by a joint progress committee and shared between institutions.

11. Fees and funding

- Registration/tuition fees:
  - home institution: _____;
  - partner institution: _____;
  - additional institutions to be added if needed.
- Funding:
  - EU funding: _____;
  - home institution funding: _____;
  - partner institution funding: _____;
  - additional funding to be added if relevant.

Financial responsibilities can be described here (e.g. as indicated in the consortium agreement).

12. Insurance and liability

- The PhD candidate must be covered by (to be detailed):
  - health insurance;
  - accident insurance;
  - civil liability insurance.
- Distribution of responsibilities and liabilities between institutions including (to be explained):
  - allocation of institutional liability;
  - responsibility during mobility periods;
  - host liability during secondments / laboratory access.

13. Thesis requirements

- Language of thesis: _____.
- Abstract(s) in other languages (if required): _____.

The submission must comply with both/all institutions' rules.

14. Examination and defence

- The thesis shall be evaluated according to both/all institutions' procedures.
- A joint examination committee shall be established.
- The composition of the examination board (including external examiners) shall be developed based on:
  - presence of external/independent examiners;
  - minimum composition rules;
  - eligibility/conflict of interest rules.
- Structure of the examination process to be detailed:
  - pre-defence assessment/review,
  - authorisation to defend,
  - final defence.
- Type of defence (to be specified):
  - single joint defence,
  - separate defences (if applicable),
  - public/restricted.
- Location(s) of defence(s).

15. Award of degree

- Upon successful completion of the programme, the candidate shall receive (to be specified):
  - a joint doctoral degree,
  - two doctoral degrees (double degree),
  - a multiple degree.
- Degree title(s):
  - home institution: _____;
  - partner institution: _____;
  - add more if relevant.

The joint supervision applicable to the PhD candidate shall be specified on the degree certificate.

16. Intellectual property and publication

- The following elements shall be described and detailed:
  - ownership of results,
  - publication rights,
  - compliance with Horizon Europe Open Science obligations,
  - acknowledgement of EU funding,
  - confidentiality obligations.

17. Ethics and good scientific practice

- The parties agree to (to be detailed):
  - follow ethical standards;
  - prevent academic misconduct;
  - comply with data protection regulations.

18. Responsibilities and communication

- The parties shall (to be detailed):
  - exchange relevant information;
  - coordinate administrative procedures;
  - inform each other of major decisions.

- Contact points:
  - home institution: _____;
  - partner institution: _____;
  - add more if relevant.

19. Conflict resolution

- Disputes shall be resolved through:
  - mutual consultation;
  - arbitration agreed by the parties;
  - amendment and update of this agreement.
- Applicable law: _____.
- Authentic language of the agreement and prevailing language in case of discrepancies (to be specified): _____.

20. Amendments

- Any modification to this agreement must be:
  - made in writing;
  - approved by all parties.

21. Termination

This agreement may be terminated:

- by mutual agreement (detail terms);
- in case of (specify in detail):
  - withdrawal of the PhD candidate,
  - failure to meet requirements,
  - *force majeure*.

22. Entry into force and duration

- Date of entry into force: _____.
- The agreement remains valid until (pick the relevant one):
  - specific date: _____;
  - completion of the PhD;

- termination under Article 21.

23. Signatures

Signed in (location), on (date)

Home institution	Partner institution	PhD candidate
Name/title/signature	Name/title/signature	Signature

Optional but recommended annexes:

- Annex 1 – Research project description
- Annex 2 – Mobility plan
- Annex 3 – Training plan / ECTS
- Annex 4 – Funding details
- Annex 5 – Timeline/milestones

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