



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

Directorate S – Innovation in Science and Policymaking  
Scientific Development Programmes

# Call for Expressions of Interest

## Collaborative Doctoral Partnership programme 2025

### Purpose of the call

The Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Programme (CDP) is an initiative of the JRC to establish strategic collaborations with higher education institutions (HEI), universities and other research organisations (in this call referred to as HEIs/universities). The programme facilitates dual PhD projects, where HEIs/universities partner up with the JRC to jointly design, host, and supervise doctoral research.

The CDP provides a unique opportunity for HEIs/universities to tap into the JRC's robust research capacity and expertise while gaining a deeper understanding of research needs throughout the European policy cycle. The CDP promotes mutual enhancement of related skills and competences, combines existing knowledge and capacities, and enhances networking in key scientific areas.

This ultimately provides high-quality policy-oriented research opportunities for doctoral students and equips them to navigate the science-policy interface.

### Scope of the call

Successful applicants will have the opportunity to establish a scientific collaboration with the JRC on an institutional level. This collaboration will engender PhD projects of common interest to jointly design, host and supervise.

Rather than an exchange of money between the HEI/university and the JRC, the CDP entails each institution covering the cost of the doctoral candidate according to their stay at the respective institution. Whilst staying at the JRC premises, the JRC will cover

the costs of the students including salary, necessary training and work-related travel costs as part of a Grantholder Category 20 position for the student.

PhD researchers partaking in the CDP will spend a minimum of 12 and maximum of 24 months at one of the JRC campuses in Ispra, Petten, Geel, Karlsruhe, Brussels and Sevilla. Which campus the PhD student will be located in, depends on the collaboration topic and is indicated in the Factsheets.

The PI and PhD researcher will become a part of the CDP community. The community comes together once a month, as an additional platform to develop the capacity to provide scientific support to policy and use transferable skills in science communication and knowledge management.

## Eligibility

The Call for expressions of Interest is directed at HEIs/universities that wish to jointly organise PhD projects with their JRC counterparts. They should be able to host and train PhD candidates, and fulfil at the closing date of the Call and for the duration of the Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) Agreement with the JRC (at least 5 years from the time of signature) the following criteria:

- Originate from an EU Member State or country associated to the EU Research Framework Programme in force; and
- Be entitled to award doctoral degrees and have administrative autonomy including signing agreements with external partners

Institutions that are not HEIs/universities may also submit applications when they have an agreement with a HEI/University that satisfies the two criteria above. In case their application is successful, the JRC will sign the CDP Agreement with both the applicant Institution and the HEI/University that delivers the PhD degree.

All applications will be checked for eligibility. Applicants with non-eligible applications will be informed after closure of the call.

## Application timeline

The application process is open until 18 March 2025 , 23.59 CET.

The selection results will be announced by 1 April 2025.

The CDP onboarding workshop for HEIs and universities will be held online on 8 April 2025, from 14.00 tot 15.30 (CET). The workshop is mandatory for all selected PIs, and recommended for at least one administrative supporting staff.

## Application process

Applications are to be submitted as an online application form completed by the HEI/university and Principal Investigator (PI) before the indicated deadline. The link to the application form is available on the CDP website for the duration of the call.

The CDP 2025 Call for Expressions of Interest is formulated around 25 collaboration topics. HEIs/universities shall submit one proposal for each collaboration topic they wish to apply for. Multiple applications from one HEI/university shall all be considered independently from one another. Multiple successful applications from the same HEI/university will proceed to sign one collaboration agreement with the JRC.

Incomplete proposals not complying with the instructions in EU Survey are considered not eligible and will not be considered for evaluation.

In case of questions on the scheme or issues with EU Survey, applicants are welcome to contact the JRC at [JRC-CDP@ec.europa.eu](mailto:JRC-CDP@ec.europa.eu)

Code	Collaboration topics
25-01	Horizontal cybersecurity
25-02	Data driven innovation
25-03	Digital society
25-04	Macroeconomic modelling and fiscal surveillance
25-05	Urban trends, analysis of cities and territories
25-06	Analyses of labour taxation with the use of EUROMOD-HHoT
25-07	Innovative health biotechnologies in a competitive Europe
25-08	Advanced Materials for Safe and Sustainable Innovation
25-09	Innovative Safe Automated and Decarbonised Built Environment
25-10	Climate tipping point risks
25-11	AI and ICT technologies in the European Crisis Management Laboratory
25-12	Improving soil health to increase water quality and reduce eutrophication
25-13	Earth system modelling for a sustainable and profitable use of marine ecosystems
25-14	Earth observation tools for monitoring and assessment of European freshwater ecosystems
25-15	The water footprint: a system perspective to water resilience
25-16	Digital Building Stock Model
25-17	EU Energy System Decarbonisation Scenarios
25-18	Electricity Risk Preparedness and Exercises for Resilience
25-19	System integration of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) in future Hybrid Energy Systems
25-20	Safety, Security, and Safeguards by design for Small Modular Reactors
25-21	Modelling emerging issues in relation to techno-economic conditions for the future role of nuclear energy in decarbonised energy systems

25-22	New evidence-based tools and approaches for developing, supporting and evaluating policies in democracy
25-23	Composite indicators and scoreboards for policy monitoring
25-24	Analysis of behavioural evidence aimed at informing policy initiatives
25-25	Technologies and methods for monitoring micro- and nano-plastics pollution

## Selection criteria

The JRC will assess and rank eligible proposals according to selection criteria pertaining to research and organisation and collaboration. Applications are given scores for every criteria, aggregating to a maximum total score of 100 points.

### Research (50 points)

- Reputation: Does the PI have a demonstrated track record within the collaboration topic? (10 points)
- Profile:
  - o To what extent does the PI have relevant expertise in the collaboration topic? (20 points)
  - o How does the PI's expertise complement the JRC's in the collaboration topic? (20 points)

### Collaboration (30 points)

- Co-designing and co-supervising:
  - o To what extent does the PI have a history of successful (international) research collaborations? In particular, does the PI have experience with collaborative doctoral programmes and dual supervisorship? (5 points)
  - o Does the PI propose adequate ways of collaboration and communication, to the extent that they can co-design, co-host and co-supervise a PhD candidate with the JRC? (10 points)
- Valorisation: To what extent does the PI have experience in policy-oriented research? To what extent does the PI consider open innovation approaches or propose to involve relevant stakeholders for data collection, prototyping and feedback cycles? Do they propose valorisation pathways? (15 points)

### Organisation (20 points)

- PhD programme: Does the HEI/university host a well-functioning and -supported PhD programme? (15 points)
- Open access: To what extent does the HEI/university have an adequate policy on accessibility and dissemination of research output? (5 points)

## Implementation

Upon closure of the application deadline, the JRC will inform applicants who submitted non-eligible proposals and proceed to assess and rank eligible proposals according to the selection criteria.

The selected candidates are invited to join the CDP onboarding workshop, preferably accompanied by at least one supporting administrative staff. Bear in mind that the workshop takes place immediately after the selection results are announced. The workshop treats the strategies and practicalities of setting up dual PhD projects with the JRC and as such ensures complete information and a smooth start of the collaboration.

The onboarding workshop is the kick-off of two parallel processes: preparing the Collaboration Agreement and the Multi-Annual Work Programme.

- The Collaboration Agreement follows a standard template, as published together with the Call for Expressions of Interest on the CDP website.<sup>(1)</sup> There is one template for HEIs and universities from EU Member States and another one for HEIs or universities from associated countries.  
Both the JRC and the HEI or university will sign the Collaboration Agreement. In case the HEI is not entitled to award doctoral degrees directly, the associate institution that is will also sign the Collaboration Agreement.  
Collaboration agreements of the CDP have an initial duration of 5 years, and can be renewed, amended or extended to accommodate possible future PhD projects beyond the initial collaboration.
- The Multi-Annual Work Programme is jointly prepared by the PIs of the HEI or university and the JRC. It should describe the General topics of cooperation, PhD topic(s) and expected outputs of the collaboration.  
The Multi-Annual Work Programme will be added to the Collaboration Programme as Annex A.
- The HEI or university and the JRC agree on the modalities for the selection of the doctoral student. The suggested modalities by the JRC are part of the Collaboration Agreement templates. The agreed upon modalities will be added to the Collaboration Agreement as Annex B.

Following the completion and signature of the Collaboration Agreement by both parties, the HEI or university and JRC start recruiting candidates to fulfil the PhD projects.

Website: [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/working-us/collaborative-doctoral-partnership-programme\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/working-us/collaborative-doctoral-partnership-programme_en)

Email: [jrc-cdp@ec.europa.eu](mailto:jrc-cdp@ec.europa.eu)

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<sup>(1)</sup> The JRC is a public institution ensuring equal treatment of all applicants. Therefore, changes to the contractual conditions deviating from the template would only be admissible for imperative reasons in order to take into account the particular situation of the HEI or university and their PhD arrangements and/or legal circumstances that would otherwise impede participation.