



# ViroiDoc

**ViroiDoc – Advanced  
Research on Viroid  
Pathogenesis and  
Control for Agricultural  
Sustainability**

**MSCA Doctoral Network**

**Open Call for 2 PhD Positions in Italy**

FAQs

[www.viroidoc.eu](http://www.viroidoc.eu)



Funded by the  
European Union

## Summary

### Open Call for 2 Doctoral positions in the MSCA Doctoral Network

#### ViroiDoc - Advanced Research on Viroid Pathogenesis and Control for Agricultural Sustainability

*This project is funded by the European Union (call HORIZON-MSCA-2023-DN-01-01).*

The ViroiDoc Doctoral Network is seeking **2 highly motivated Doctoral Candidates (DC)** to join our research teams **in Italy**. Successful candidates will have the opportunity to participate in the **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action (MSCA)**.

Positions are available to candidates who hold a university degree (MSc or equivalent) in plant biology, genetics, cell biology, biology, bioinformatics, biochemistry, chemistry, or a related discipline, completed no later than the start of the PhD project. The successful candidate should have a strong interest in conducting collaborative research in international and cross-sectoral contexts.

**Application deadline: 5 September 2025, 23:59 CET.**

For more information, please visit [www.viroidoc.eu](http://www.viroidoc.eu).

Date	Version	Changes
18/07/2025	V1.1	Indicative timeline
23/06/2025	V1.0	

# Table of contents

<b>Summary Open Call for 2 Doctoral positions in the MSCA Doctoral Network.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>1 About ViroiDoc .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 What is ViroiDoc? .....	1
1.2 What is MSCA Doctoral Network? .....	1
1.3 What offers ViroiDoc Doctoral Network? .....	1
1.4 Who is comprising ViroiDoc Network? .....	1
1.5 What research projects offers ViroiDoc? .....	1
1.6 Where do I find more information? .....	1
<b>2 ViroiDoc training program details.....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 What does the PhD program involve? .....	2
2.2 What is the duration of the PhD program? .....	2
2.3 Are there any secondment periods during the PhD? .....	2
2.4 What are the main responsibilities of a Doctoral Candidate? .....	2
2.5 Who are the supervisors for the PhD projects? .....	2
2.6 Where do I find more information about the research and training project offer? .....	2
<b>3 Eligibility .....</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 Who can apply for PhD positions in ViroiDoc? .....	3
3.2 What are the eligibility criteria for PhD enrolment? .....	3
3.3 What is the mobility rule for applying to the PhD positions.....	3
3.4 Can non-EU international students apply for the PhD positions? .....	3
3.5 Can I apply even if I already have a PhD? .....	3
3.6 What are the requirements for the English certificate needed for admission to the program? .....	3
<b>4 Application &amp; selection process .....</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 How do I apply for a PhD position? .....	4
4.2 What are the mandatory attachments and supporting documents.....	4
4.3 How to mark submitted documents? .....	4
4.4 What is a Proof of Residence? .....	4
4.5 Can reference letters be sent separately? .....	4
4.6 What is the selection process like? .....	5
<b>5 What are the benefits? .....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1 What is the salary for PhD candidates? .....	6
5.2 Are there any additional allowances provided? .....	6
5.3 What benefits are provided to Doctoral Candidates? .....	6
5.4 What is the Open Call timeline? .....	6

# 1 About ViroiDoc

## 1.1 What is ViroiDoc?

ViroiDoc is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Doctoral Network. It is committed to gaining a comprehensive understanding of the challenges posed by viroids.

## 1.2 What is MSCA Doctoral Network?

[Doctoral Networks](#) implement programmes to recruit and train doctoral candidates in academia and other sectors, including industry, businesses, and public administrations.

## 1.3 What offers ViroiDoc Doctoral Network?

ViroiDoc Network offers an exceptional interdisciplinary research and innovative training environment for 10 doctoral students, equipping them with the expertise to advance their careers in research, product and service development in agriculture, biotech, and biomedicine. For more information, see the list of [Individual Research Projects \(IRP\)](#).

## 1.4 Who is comprising ViroiDoc Network?

ViroiDoc includes academic institutions and industry partners from Slovenia, Italy, Spain, France, Greece, Germany, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Poland, the United States, and Argentina. Collectively, these institutions offer exceptional interdisciplinary research and an innovative training environment for 10 doctoral students, equipping them with the expertise to advance their careers in research, product and service development in agriculture, biotech, biosensors, and biomedicine.

## 1.5 What research projects offers ViroiDoc?

ViroiDoc Doctoral Network offers exciting projects on viroids, the smallest plant pathogens, and viroid-like RNAs that have only recently been discovered outside the plant kingdom. The programme includes secondments to partner laboratories or companies involved in plant breeding and plant protection located in the EU and Argentina.

## 1.6 Where do I find more information?

For more information, visit [www.viroidoc.eu](http://www.viroidoc.eu) or contact [info@viroidoc.eu](mailto:info@viroidoc.eu).

## 2 ViroiDoc training program details

### 2.1 What does the PhD program involve?

The program includes three years of fully funded research, international training, networking opportunities, and secondments at partner universities and industries. International, multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral ViroiDoc doctoral training program encompasses different types of training activities: (1) Individual Research Projects (IRP), including secondments, (2) ViroiDoc-specific training, and (3) PhD programme and training provided by local doctoral schools.

### 2.2 What is the duration of the PhD program?

The PhD program duration is three years, with enrolment planned for October 2025. In Italy, the DC will participate in a three-year study program of the [Doctorate School in Biodiversity, Agriculture and Environment](#), of the Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro (UNIBA, DiSSPA).

### 2.3 Are there any secondment periods during the PhD?

Yes, each DC positions require the candidate to participate in secondments to other institutions, lasting up to a maximum of 1/3 of the 36-month MSCA-funded fellowship. For positions in Italy secondments in Slovenia (DC7) and Spain (DC8) are foreseen.

### 2.4 What are the main responsibilities of a Doctoral Candidate?

Responsibilities include developing a specific individual research project (IRP) within ViroiDoc, participating in training programs and project meetings, writing scientific papers, and presenting research at conferences and outreach events.

### 2.5 Who are the supervisors for the PhD projects?

Each Doctoral Candidate will have [supervisors](#) from both the academic and industrial partners involved in the ViroiDoc network. These supervisors are distinguished professors and researchers who have many years of experience in teaching and research in this field.

### 2.6 Where do I find more information about the research and training project offer?

An overview of each research and training project on offer, along with the applicant requirements, can be found in the ViroiDoc Open Call Guidelines for applicants, which are available on the [ViroiDoc website](#). Please read the project descriptions carefully to ensure that you meet the necessary criteria.

## 3 Eligibility

### 3.1 Who can apply for PhD positions in ViroiDoc?

Positions are available to candidates who hold a university degree (MSc or equivalent) in plant biology, genetics, cell biology, biology, bioinformatics, biochemistry, chemistry, or a related discipline, completed no later than the start of the PhD project. The successful candidate should have a strong interest in conducting collaborative research in international and cross-sectoral contexts.

### 3.2 What are the eligibility criteria for PhD enrolment?

Applicants must meet both the MSCA mobility rule, and the specific requirements set by each participating institution, including the entry requirements for the doctoral programme and the knowledge and skills applicants must demonstrate.

### 3.3 What is the mobility rule for applying to the PhD positions

To be eligible for the PhD positions, candidates must have not resided or carried out their main activity (e.g., work, study) in the country of the recruiting beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before their recruitment date. This rule ensures that the program is accessible to candidates from diverse geographical backgrounds.

### 3.4 Can non-EU international students apply for the PhD positions?

Yes, international candidates are encouraged to apply for the PhD position while respecting the mobility rule.

### 3.5 Can I apply even if I already have a PhD?

You can apply if you do not possess a doctoral degree on the date of recruitment. However, researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but have not yet been formally awarded the degree will not be considered eligible.

### 3.6 What are the requirements for the English certificate needed for admission to the program?

The English certificate must comply with the specific requirements of the host institution for the DC to which you are applying - certificate at the level B2-C2 in line with the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - CEFR](#).

The required level of English for admission to the position at the University of Bari Aldo Moro in Italy is not explicitly indicated. As part of the PhD programme selection procedure, candidates undergo an oral examination. This evaluation includes an assessment of the candidate's English language proficiency. For ViroiDoc application purposes, you may also submit a certificate for a higher education qualification (e.g. a Master's degree) that was taught in English.

## 4 Application & selection process

### 4.1 How do I apply for a PhD position?

Applications must be submitted electronically via the ViroiDoc website form, available on [www.viroidoc.eu](http://www.viroidoc.eu), and must be complete and contain all mandatory attachments and supporting documents. For more information, see the ViroiDoc Open Call Guidelines for Applicants, available on ViroiDoc website.

### 4.2 What are the mandatory attachments and supporting documents

The following documents are mandatory for submission along with your application, for details see ViroiDoc Open Call Guidelines for applicants:

- Copy of valid ID (passport or other) document.
- Copy of Proof of Residence, issued by an administrative unit or a similar authority.
- CV in [Europass format](#).
- Academic transcripts of records and diplomas in English and certified - a scanned copy of the original Master's degree with full transcripts.
- Proof of English language proficiency.
- Motivation letter (max 1000 words).
- Two Reference Letters, including names and contact details of referees.

### 4.3 How to mark submitted documents?

All required documents attached as a pdf file must include the specific DC code of the position that the candidate is applying to. Example of Pdf file name: "DC No. ViroiDoc MSCA DN Application-Family name-CV.pdf". Applications not meeting this condition will be automatically rejected.

### 4.4 What is a Proof of Residence?

A copy of proof of residence must be issued by an administrative unit or a similar authority in the city in which you are currently residing. By submitting this document, you will prove that you have not resided or carried out your main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the selected host laboratory for more than 12 months during the 3 years immediately before the recruitment date (the starting date indicated in the employment contract or equivalent direct contract).

### 4.5 Can reference letters be sent separately?

Yes, your recommenders can send reference letters separately to [info@viroidoc.eu](mailto:info@viroidoc.eu), but they must be clearly marked with your name, e.g. DC No. ViroiDoc MSCA DN Application-Family name-reference.pdf.

## 4.6 What is the selection process like?

Applications will be assessed based on academic qualifications, research potential, motivation, career plans and experience of working internationally and across disciplines. Applications will be evaluated after the submission deadline, including an eligibility check and two stages of review. In Stage 1, eligible candidates will be reviewed by a project-specific selection committee. Those scoring more than 75% will be included in the initial ranking list and invited to an online interview (Stage 2).



## 5 What are the benefits?

### 5.1 What is the salary for PhD candidates?

Each DC position has its own specific benefits, in line with the MSCA-DN guidelines. The approximate gross amount depends on national legislation in each member country and is detailed for each PhD position. The net salary depends on the candidate's family situation.

### 5.2 Are there any additional allowances provided?

Yes, monthly gross salary information is indicated, which may be higher if/when a mobility allowance (600 EUR) is received. In addition, a monthly family allowance of EUR 660 may be granted if the eligibility conditions are met. A doctoral candidate may also apply for a special needs allowance. The request should include a description of the special needs, the type of support and the budget requested. The requested special needs allowance is limited.

### 5.3 What benefits are provided to Doctoral Candidates?

An opportunity to pursue a PhD at a leading European research center, offering an interdisciplinary and international work environment with top-tier facilities. The program includes exceptional mentoring, career support, and a comprehensive training network across academia and industry. It provides training in advanced techniques, along with a range of scientific, technical, digital, entrepreneurial, and transferable skills through innovative modules and internships.

### 5.4 What is the Open Call timeline?

Indicative Open call timeline is as follows:

- 23 July 2025: Launch of the open call.
- 5 September 2025, 23:59 CET: Deadline for submitting applications.
- September-October 2025: Evaluation of candidates.
- October 2025: Notification of selected candidates.
- From October 2025: Start participation in ViroiDoc Network.
- Duration of each fellowship: 36 months and no longer than 31/12/2028.