



## Dear Readers,

In order for the European society to widely benefit from innovation and its derivatives, innovation must expand to the periphery. Centres of Excellence are one of the key players in shaping the regional innovation ecosystem. However, within the European Research Area regional innovation centres face uneven conditions. In order to improve this situation and give each regional innovation centre a fair chance, Horizon 2020 has set up the “Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation” programme aimed at establishing relations between advanced innovation centres in advanced countries and those from less innovative ones in Europe. National Contact Points (NCPs) play a very important role in this programme.

They provide expertise and support to applicants as well as foster the collaboration between the innovation centres.

NCP\_WIDE.NET project which promotes “Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation” programme enhances the quality of services offered by the NCPs and provides tools for sharing information. This Newsletter is yet another means for doing just that. On behalf of the NCP\_WIDE.NET project’s team I would like to invite you to make use of the services we offer. This newsletter is designed to give you information, insight and to convince you to contact your local NCP and make your vision come true.



Katarzyna Walczyk-Matuszyk  
NCP\_WIDE.NET Project Coordinator

## SPREADING EXCELLENCE AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION

### 2017 work programme UPDATES

Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation (WIDESPREAD) – 2017 work programme includes a few revisions:

**1. Updated Evaluation Process** - The submission deadline was brought forward more than two months ahead of the original schedule, following the European Commission Introduction of hearings as part of the evaluation process. This additional stage aims to ensure the best quality and accuracy in the evaluation process, selecting 9 out of 31 projects.

**2. New Eligible Countries** - [Tunisia, Georgia, \[Armenia\] becoming H2020 Associated country](#). With this change, organizations from Tunisia, Georgia, [Armenia], entitled to apply as coordinators to Widening measures. With Composite Indicator for Research Excellence calculated below average (capped at 70%), Tunisia, Georgia, [Armenia], are being considered as 'low RDI performer' for the Widening measures

which make them eligible for coordinator role. The status of Armenia that would become eligible as soon as the Association Agreement comes into force.

The next call to be opened [WIDESPREAD-04-2017: Teaming Phase 1](#). The call is expected to open on 28 July 2016, with a deadline of 15 November 2016. This will be the first opportunity for organizations from Tunisia, Georgia, [Armenia] to benefit as coordinators to Widening measures.

**3. Pilot on Open Research Data** paragraph in the introductory part of WP is replaced with a standard sentence that makes research data sharing the default option for grant beneficiaries of the 2017 calls.

**4. Increase budget for External Expertise** from 100.000 to 400.000 euros in the 2017 budget. This is to fund project reviews of ongoing Widening projects by REA that uses 'monitors' (expert reviewers) to assess the deliverables and participate in review meetings.

## HOW ARE WE DOING SO FAR?

### Analysis of 2014 and 2015 results

During 2014-2015 “Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation” (“WIDESPREAD”) programme published calls in four actions:

- Promoting Centers of Excellence: “Teaming”
- Promoting Specific fields of Research: “Twinning”
- Enabling Structural Changes for Promoting Excellence: “ERA-Chairs”
- Fostering Inclusive Research and Innovation Policy: COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)

The European Commission analysed the results of first three in order to better understand the participation patterns in the first calls of this programme. For the forth action, results are not available yet, and they will be analysed in the future.

#### **ACTION: Promoting Centers of Excellence: “Teaming”**

This action aims at establishing new Centres of Excellence, or upgrading existing ones, in “low research & innovation (R&I) performing countries”.

##### **Key statistics (Phase I):**

Out of 167 eligible proposals, from 20 countries, 31 proposals were selected for funding from 14 “Widening” countries (success rate: 19%). Most funded proposals are in the fields of Physics & Chemistry and Medicine & Life Sciences. The average requested EU contribution per proposal was € 430.000.

**Participation of ‘Widening’ countries:** 15 Member states and 5 associated countries participated in the call. The largest number of submissions was from: Romania (24), Poland (19) and Cyprus (14). The most successful were Portugal and Slovakia (4 each), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland (3 each).

**Participation of ‘advanced’ partners:** The largest number of submissions was from: Germany (136) and United Kingdom (67). The most successful are Germany (21), Austria (6) and Finland (6).



## HOW ARE WE DOING SO FAR?

### Analysis of 2014 and 2015 results

#### **ACTION: Promoting Specific fields of Research: “Twinning”**

This action gives grants for mentorship of an institution in a low R&I performing country, by internationally leading research institutions, in order to strengthen a defined field of research.

##### **Key statistics:**

Out of 546 eligible proposals, from 24 countries, 66 proposals were selected for funding from 17 "Widening" countries (success rate: 12%).

**Participation of ‘Widening’ countries:** The largest number of submissions was from: Portugal (77), Poland (62) and Czech Republic (56). The most successful were Portugal (11) Romania (9), Estonia and Poland (7 each).

**Participation of “advanced” partners:** the most successful 'advanced' partners were United Kingdom (31), Germany (29) and Italy (26).

#### **ACTION: Enabling Structural Changes for Promoting Excellence: “ERA-Chairs”**

This action gives grants for hiring high quality personnel to implement structural changes necessary to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.

##### **Key statistics:**

87 eligible proposals, from 16 countries, were submitted, of which the largest number of submissions was from: Portugal (13), Poland (9) and Estonia, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia (8 proposals each).

14 proposals were selected for funding from 6 "Widening" countries: Portugal and Estonia (4 each), Cyprus and Poland (2 each) and Croatia and Romania (1 each).

The 2014 call's success rate: 17%.

## HOW ARE WE DOING SO FAR?

### Analysis of 2014 and 2015 results

**T**he overall goal of the “Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation” programme with its various actions is to **improve the European competitive position in Research and Innovation (R&I) by investing in the R&I capacities of European “Widening” Countries (low-performing Member States in terms of R&I) and leading to economic growth.**

The results clearly showed that of the three actions the **most popular** one was **“Twinning”** (564 eligible proposals compared to 167 in “Teaming” and 87 in “ERA-Chairs”) which also presented a **wider geographical coverage.**

Of the “Widening” Countries, those that are member states, all submitted proposals to **“Teaming”** and **“Twinning”** while in **“ERA-Chairs”** two member states did not submit any proposals (Malta and Lithuania).

All eligible “Widening” associated countries submitted to **“Twinning”**, five of them to **“Teaming”** and three to **“ERA-Chair”**. Serbia is the only associated country that submitted proposals to the three actions.

Overall, Portugal, Poland and Romania are the most active countries in all three actions while Malta and Estonia had the highest success rate.

For recommendations based on these results please see the “WIDENING Programme - Tips for successful participation” in the “Read-Me – Recommended Publication” Section in this Newsletter.

## INCREASE YOUR CHANCES TO SUBMIT A WINNING PROPOSAL

### Learn from the experience of successful Widening proposals

When submitting proposals, applicants have to closely follow the requirements of the call. These include fulfilling eligibility requirements, presenting an idea within the scope of the call and of course making sure they submit the proposal before the deadline.

In order to increase the chances of winning a proposal we have gathered here some general recommendations relevant

for any submission and with special attention to the “Widening” programme, as well as lessons learnt from the various actions of “Widening” based on the European Commission’s analysis of three calls during 2014-2105. We suggest any interested party to study them carefully and apply them to the proposal as well as consulting the NCPs.

### Take the evaluation criteria seriously

The evaluation criteria in the *Widening* programme are the same as in all Horizon 2020 projects. Proposals are evaluated against their scientific quality (*excellence*), the breadth and scope of their effects (*impact*), and management quality (*implementation*). Good proposals will respond to these criteria as defined in the proposal template.

### Follow the call description

Make sure you are in line with the call’s objectives and rational.

### Get out there, and ask questions

Preparing a *WIDESPREAD* project proposal, as preparing many other Horizon 2020 proposals, is a project in itself! Contact your [National Contact Point](#) or other relevant authorities in charge of *WIDESPREAD* projects. Their support can save you time and money – and lead to success.

## INCREASE YOUR CHANCES TO SUBMIT A WINNING PROPOSAL

### Learn from the experience of successful Widening proposals

#### Choose committed Partners

Specifically in the WIDESPREAD programme which supports close collaborations between research groups from different parts of Europe, as this peer learning idea is fundamental, the project proposal must convincingly demonstrate that all partners have committed to working together in case the project is funded. This could be done by including support letters in the proposal.

#### Use the “Smart Specialisation” Strategy

EU funding can be used most effectively if only projects that are meaningful to a region or country are funded. The European Commission has coined the concept of “Smart Specialisation”, referring to a process that invites countries to define priority areas for regional economic development, and to follow-up how these goals are achieved. Project proposals from the Horizon 2020 *Widening* part gain credibility when mentioning how they tie into their country’s or region’s Smart Specialisation Strategy. The more concrete the reference, the more convincing it will be. The [Smart Specialisation Platform](#) may provide you assistance.

#### Serve dinner... with forks and knives

. It is not enough to prepare a delicious dinner, if you forget giving your guests forks and knives. In other words, project proposals that understood the importance of all aspects of *impact* stand good chances of being funded.



## INCREASE YOUR CHANCES TO SUBMIT A WINNING PROPOSAL

### Learn from the experience of successful Widening proposals

**Action specific lessons learnt based on the European Commission's analysis of three calls during 2014-2105**

#### **Teaming 2014 – phase 1**

Successful proposals were clearly marked by:

- Clear objectives, vision and scientific excellence
- Engaging strategically in medium and long term science and innovation growth
- Well-chosen, carefully structured partnership & strong engagement from parties
- Broad alignment with national / regional Smart Specialization Strategies
- Long term financial commitments from relevant authorities
- Clear strategy on handling resources

#### **Twinning 2015**

Successful proposals were clearly marked by:

- Well defined scientific strategy towards excellence in the relevant research field
- Clear illustration of the scientific qualities of "advanced" partners and their added value to the project
- Outlining of the expected impact of the twinning exercise on the institution in the Widening country at the national / regional level, based on specific indicators

#### **ERA-Chairs 2014**

Successful proposals were clearly marked by:

- Objectives reflecting specific institutional changes were clearly defined
- The role and autonomy of the ERA Chair holder was demonstrated
- Work Packages were consistent and contributed to an overall Action Plan
- Management structures were simple and well defined



## “GO-TO” Events

### CONFERENCE: European research Area – Link. Shape. Develop. Berlin, Germany | 10 OCTOBER 2016

The conference aims to make an interim evaluation of the Strategy of the German Federal Government on the European Research Area (ERA), as well as generate new impetus for the future development of European research and innovation policies.

Relevant document: [Strategy of the Federal Government on the European Research Area \(ERA\) - Guidelines and National Roadmap](#).

Registration is already open [here](#).



### WORKSHOP: Synergies between Horizon 2020 and Structural Funds Brussels, Belgium | 11-12 October 2016

**Organizer:** NCP.WIDE\_Net project

For information and registration: [H2020 & ESIF](#)


### WORKSHOP: ERA Chairs and Mobility Brussels, Belgium | 12 October 2016

**Organizer:** NCP.WIDE\_Net project

For information and registration: [ERA Chairs and Mobility](#)

## “READ ME” – RECOMMENDED PUBLICATIONS

### NCP.WIDE\_NET:



#### **Centres of Excellence – Lessons Learnt**

The [NCP\\_WIDE.NET Benchmarking Report](#) presents a qualitative analysis of the aspects related to the Centres' of Excellence (FP7 REGPOT, FP6 ToK, FP5 CoE, SF CoE) potential and its further enhancement with a view to the Teaming / Twinning actions and reflects on practical case studies. This is done by recognizing the aspects that either promote or impair a Centre's odds for successful participation under the Teaming / Twinning actions in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020.



#### **WIDENING Programme - Tips for successful participation**

The guide [“How to participate in the Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation activities”](#) presents the different Widening actions, examples of funded projects, includes recommendations on how to improve one's position and visibility, especially newcomers from low performing regions and gives practical advices on proposal preparation and “Widening” project implementation.



#### **Presentations from the WIDENING Brokerage Event (June 2016)**

NCP\_WIDE.NET project organized a [“WIDESPREAD Brokerage 2016”](#) event as a side event of [“Week of Innovative Regions in Europe VII” \(WIRE 2016\)](#) event in Brainport Eindhoven, June 8 2016. The event provided 30 interested parties the opportunity to meet and discuss project ideas relating to WIDESPREAD calls such as Teaming, Twinning, ERA-Chairs including also COST actions.

Presentations of the mini-info-session can be found [here](#).

## “READ ME” – RECOMMENDED PUBLICATIONS

### GENERAL:



#### **Presentations from the last EC’s WIDENING Programme Info-Day (April 2016)**

“Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation in Horizon 2020” INFO DAY was held in Brussels on Friday 8th April 2016. Presentations are available on [NCP\\_WIDE.NET](http://NCP_WIDE.NET) [website](http://NCP_WIDE.NET).



#### **R&I – An EU Comparative Overview**

The annual [European Innovation Scoreboard 2016](#) provides a comparative assessment of the research and innovation performance of the EU Member States and the relative strengths and weaknesses of their research and innovation systems. The annual Innovation Union Scoreboard. The report aims at helping Member States assess areas in which they need to concentrate their efforts in order to boost their innovation performance. A wider European as well as International levels comparison is provided.



#### **Statistical spotlight: Snapshot of the EU Regions with a View to Selected Europe 2020 Targets**

The NUTS classification (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) is a system to divide the territory of Member States (MS) into regions for the purpose of collection and harmonisation of statistics and for socio-economic analysis. There are three NUTS levels: 1, 2 and 3 respectively, moving from smaller to larger territorial units. This 8 pages paper provides [statistics for the 276 NUTS 2 regions](#), in graphs and maps illustrating the gaps among EU regions.