



Teaming: The pathway to creating jewels of excellence in Europe By Mr. Robert-Jan Smits , Director General

2017 has started as a very promising year for the spreading excellence and widening participation agenda. **€16.7 million of extra budget from the MFF review has been given to Widening in 2017 and even more is expected in 2018-20.** The 67 Twinning and 14 ERA Chairs projects are running at full speed. In addition and following the results on the impact of these measures in the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020, one extra Twinning call and one extra ERA Chairs call are now foreseen in 2018. Moreover, in March 2017 was announced that 30 more Teaming Phase 1 projects will receive funding to produce business plans for eventual new Centres of Excellence in the different Widening countries.



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Teaming: The pathway to creating jewels of excellence in Europe

Most importantly though, the first half of 2017 has seen Teaming, the new flagship instrument of Horizon 2020 in support of institutional change in Widening countries, really take flesh and shape through the **launch of 10 new Teaming projects that will develop 10 new (or upgraded) Centres of Excellence in 9 different countries.**

Expectations for Teaming were high from the beginning, since its inception in 2011 (even before Horizon 2020 had started).

The interest, enthusiasm and hard work we have seen over the last years is remarkable and it is exceeding expectations.

Visiting Widening countries, I was delighted to see people's excitement when talking about Teaming, from researchers to professors, funding agencies, managing authorities and to Ministers themselves.

These 10 Teaming projects with a total funding of €140 million have started in March 2017 and will run for 5-7 years with Horizon 2020 funding as part of the start-up phase of these Centres of Excellence. I personally attended more than half of the kick-off meetings for these projects and in every country I was impressed with the level attendance and full support by both the academic and business stakeholders. Furthermore, political support for these initiatives was impressive with even Heads of State opening some of these kick-off meetings.

Launching the Teaming projects was the easy part. It is now time to focus all the work on making these Centres a success.



Teaming: The pathway to creating jewels of excellence in Europe

As I have mentioned many times before, the key to successful participation in Framework Programmes is institutional change. And this is exactly the objective of these Centres of Excellence: to create ambitious structures in Widening countries that will become hubs of excellence, providing the right framework conditions of operation, attracting the best talents worldwide and performing state of art research and innovation.

There are also a number of challenges that we need to overcome to make this vision a reality. **Teaming is the first instrument of its kind that actively promotes synergies with the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF),** as it requires complementary funding (at least of the same amount as the Horizon 2020 funding) for investments in infrastructure from other sources.

These 10 projects have been successfully evaluated and funded on the promise that the complementary funding from governments and ESIF managing authorities will come through.

This is a sine qua non condition for the success of these Centres. Going a step further, **these Centres should continue to be supported by other funding sources even beyond Horizon 2020 funding.**

Furthermore to ensure the right conditions of operation of **these Centres they need to be autonomous in academic, operational and most importantly financial aspects.** Only with this autonomy will they be able to excel, enable science to flourish and bring the desired change needed within the Centre and eventually spread it to the region or country.



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Finally, **interaction, communication and visibility are crucial to place Teaming and these Centres on the global racetrack.** That is why I welcome the initiative of the 10 Teaming coordinators to set up the Teaming Club where they informally exchange views and best practices between them in order to make these projects a success.

We will be able to host the next meeting of the Teaming Club in November 2017 in Brussels in the context of the Widening Days.

I would like to end with the wish to see these Centres become the "jewels" of excellence in their countries and the wish that at least one of the Centres becomes a CERN-like reference by year 2030.

SPREADING EXCELLENCE AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Current Widening Calls UPDATES

We are approaching the end of 2017 with the closing of the last Calls from the Widening package: ERA Chairs and Twinning.

ERA Chairs Call

The ERA Chairs action will support universities or other eligible research organisations to attract and maintain high quality human resources and implement the structural changes necessary to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.

An ERA Chair holder should be an outstanding researcher and research manager in the given field of research, with a proven record of effective leadership. They should establish their own team and help the research organisation to significantly improve its research performance and to be more successful in obtaining competitive funding.

SPREADING EXCELLENCE AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Current Widening Calls UPDATES

The ERA Chairs is a **mono-beneficiary** action and the applicant organisation must be based in a Widening country. It is a Coordination and Support Action with a maximum EU contribution of **2,5 million** euro and it can last up to **5 years**.

Deadline: 15th November 2017.

Click [here](#) to find the topic.

Twinning Call

The Twinning action aims to support a research institution based in a Widening country in strengthening its knowledge in a specific research field and building a strong research network.

These goals will be reached through linking coordinator to two internationally-leading counterparts in the specific research field.

Twinning is a Coordination and Support Action and the coordinator must be based in a Widening country. The other partners must be internationally-leading research institutions established in another Member State or Associated Country.

Funding will be dedicated to the following actions: staff exchanges, expert visits, workshop and conference attendance, on-site/virtual training, organisation of joint summer school activities.

This action can receive a maximum of **1 million** euro and it can last up to **3 years**.

Deadline: 15th November 2017

Click [here](#) to find the topic.

If you are interested in these Calls and you want to participate, please read the Guide *How to participate in the Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation activities*, published by the **NCP_WIDE.NET** project where you will find a lot of useful information and best practices of successful projects. You can download it [here](#).

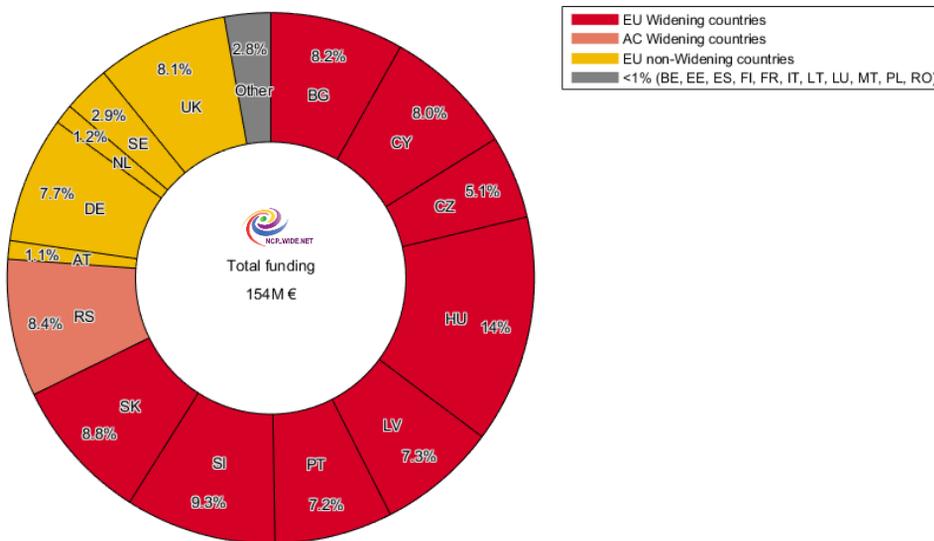
HOW ARE WE DOING SO FAR?

Highlights of the Teaming 2014 and 2015 Calls results

Launching of new centres of excellence

Initial centres of excellence for attaining a competitive position in the global value chains has been initiated by EU Commission. Three quarters of all funding are to be invested in widening countries, which will provide an equivalent investment from respective countries European Structural fund budgeted.

Teaming 2014/2015 call, funding distribution by countries



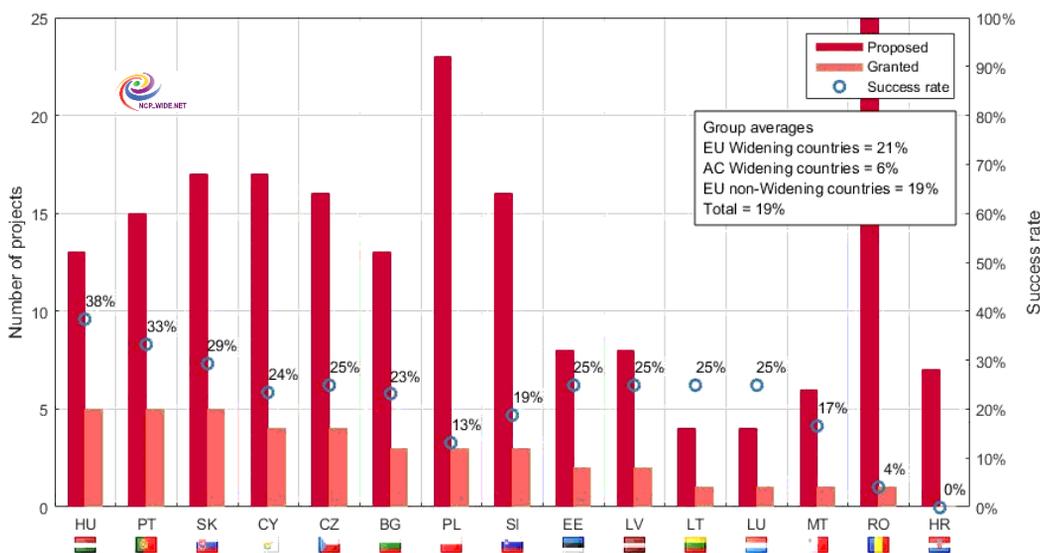
HOW ARE WE DOING SO FAR?

Analysis of 2014 and 2015 results: Teaming call

Primary ten new emerging centres of excellence in widening countries were funded to form a pathway in development of regional innovation growth strategy.

Proposals were submitted with participants from 15 EU Widening countries and 13 EU non-Widening countries. Proposals coordinated by 14 EU Widening countries were selected on Teaming Phase, with beneficiaries from 10 EU non-Widening countries.

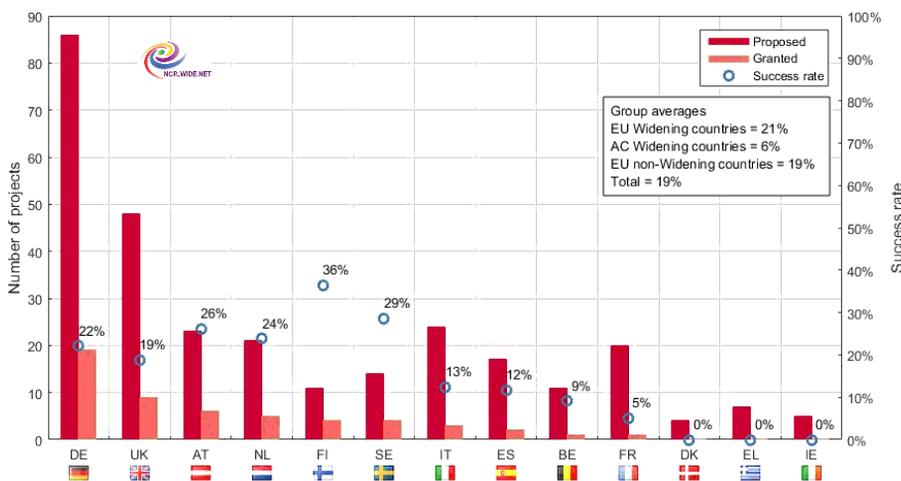
On average, every fourth project submitted under Teaming Phase-1 and Phase-2 has been granted. Hungary, Portugal and Slovakia share largest number of funded projects with an average project success above 30%. On the contrary, Romania with extraordinary large oversubscription, retained only 4% of all submitted project.





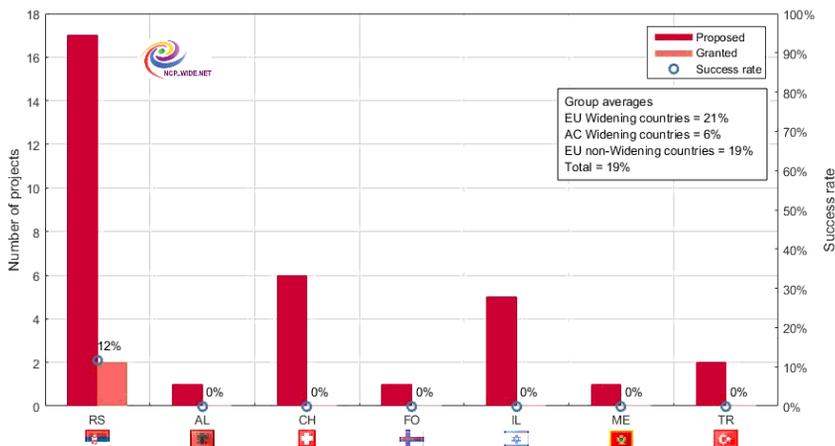
HOW ARE WE DOING SO FAR?

Analysis of 2014 and 2015 results: Teaming call



Of the EU non-Widening countries, Germany and the United Kingdom share largest number of funded projects, while Finland had the highest Success rate.

Seven Associated Countries participated in the call. Serbia (Widening country) is the only Associated Country which has benefited from this scheme so far.





INCREASE YOUR CHANCES TO SUBMIT A WINNING PROPOSAL

Social Sciences & Humanities Integration

Social sciences and humanities – an added value for your project

For decades, European research was primarily based on the expertise of researchers specialised in life and physical sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Now, the new Horizon 2020 policy looks further – it is based on a premise that integration of social sciences and humanities (SSH) *aspects into European research projects* is indispensable to generate new knowledge and innovation.

SSH encompasses various disciplines – from sociology, psychology, communication and political science to economics, history, culture, *law and ethics*. It is evident that the knowledge for solving different societal challenges, is spread across STEM and SSH disciplines.

SSH integration in Horizon 2020 projects can yield innovative solutions and products that are socially acceptable, directly applicable, marketable and cost-effective. In addition, SSH integration can substantially enhance the impact of the project and support effective dissemination of results and communication with the target group and the wider public.

What does SSH integration mean in practice?

SSH experts contribute to framing Horizon 2020 topics and, consequently, the SSH aspects determined by them must be adequately addressed in Horizon 2020 proposals. In addition, evaluation panels include SSH expertise and the evaluators are trained on how to identify and evaluate SSH aspects. Given the above, inclusion of SSH expertise in project proposals can substantially increase evaluation scores and consequently raise a chance for a grant.

INCREASE YOUR CHANCES TO SUBMIT A WINNING PROPOSAL

Social Sciences & Humanities Integration

In order to see in detail which are the specific SSH aspects, please visit the dedicated section on the [Participant Portal](#)

Where in the proposal should SSH aspects be included?

SSH aspects should be included in all three parts of a Horizon 2020 proposal, i.e. Excellence, Impact and Implementation, as required by the evaluation criteria.

What do SSH aspects include?

In general, SSH aspects refer to the expertise in the following fields:

- Behavioural aspects,
- Consumption and lifestyles,
- Management, governance,
- Public awareness & acceptance,
- Policy support / assessment,
- Social innovation,
- Markets, business development,
- Economic systems and instruments.

More information:

Net4Society is the international network of National Contact Points for the Societal Challenge 6 "Europe in a changing world: inclusive, innovative and reflective societies". [Net4Society website](#) contains numerous documents and publications on SSH integration, in particular the "Opportunities" document for SSH researchers, which collects all the opportunities for SSH.

The reports on the [SSH integration in Horizon 2020](#), were published by the European Commission, for the years 2014 and 2015.

You can also **contact your [National Contact Point \(NCP\) for Societal Challenge 6](#)** for further information, assistance and advice.



Previous Events

Event 1: SYNERGIES BETWEEN ESI FUNDS AND HORIZON 2020

Brussels, Belgium | 11-12 October 2016

The workshop was organised by NCP_WIDE.NET aimed at providing examples in which EF/ESIF and FP7/H2020 funds have been combined in order to amplify the R&I investments and their impact, as well as analyzed key success factors and barriers on building synergies. Synergies were tackled at polict, national, institutional and project level. [For more information and videos](#)

Event 2: ERA Chairs and mobility schemes in H2020 “Drivers, barriers & lessons learnt” Brussels, Belgium | 12 October 2016

This workshop was organised by NCP_WIDE.NET aimed to highlight and share lessons learnt on selected mobility schemes that are aimed at institutional level. The discussion tackled the mobility issues of the MSCA programmes, the various ERC grants, the Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation pillar, as well as in the COST Actions. The issue of how mobility programmes in H2020 can have a synergistic effect, especially with respect to widening countries was as well raised.

[For more information and videos](#)

Event 3: Aligning implementation of RIS3 and H2020 funding across research priorities Brussels, Belgium | 9 March 2017

The workshop is been organised jointly by NCP Academy, DG JRC and NCP_WIDE.NET focused on **synergies within specialized thematic areas**, as well as creating a forum for exchange of best practices and enhancing collaboration between NCPs as well as regional/ national authorities managing European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). The workshop resulted in joint summary and recommendations.

[For more information](#)



“GO-TO” Events

European Research Excellence - Impact and Value for Society Tallinn, Estonia | 12 October 2017

The aim of the conference is to demonstrate to policymakers that excellent research is essential to addressing Europe’s challenges and for increasing competitiveness.

The conference brings together internationally outstanding scientists and policymakers from many EU countries, as well as a range of stakeholders from academia, business, and civil society. It will encourage an open debate on how excellent research generates societal and economic added value and how we nurture the framework post-2020.

[For More Info](#)

New Tools for WideSpread in Research and Innovation Programmes Tallinn, Estonia | 16 November 2017

The event is part of Baltic Science Network programme that is aimed at discussing the most promising solutions to help increase the participation of moderate innovators in research and innovation initiatives implemented in the European Research Area.

The Network is connecting the targeted multilateral activities in the frame of research and innovation excellence, mobility of scientists and expanded participation.

The current event is focussing on widening participation in research and innovation programmes.

[For More Info](#)

“READ ME” – RECOMMENDED PUBLICATIONS

NCP.WIDE_NET:

Support for applicants of Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

NCP_WIDE.NET network developed practical publications which supports the applicants in the proposals preparation phase, in 2017 in particular with regard to calls on **Twinning, ERA Chairs and COST**. Instructions, practical tips and successful case studies are to be found in:

The guide [“How to participate in the Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation activities”](#) - presents the different Widening actions, examples of funded projects, includes recommendations for newcomers.

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.

Widening package – stock taking and future orientation

In March 2017, the German Aerospace Center (DLR) Project Management Agency organized within the NCP_WIDE.NET and in cooperation with the NCP Academy a workshop on the Widening package - stock-taking and future orientations in Bonn. In light of the major European research and innovation policy instruments the workshop took stock of the experiences with the various programme lines of Widening, in particular Teaming, Twinning and ERA Chairs.

Key messages concerned i.a. **visibility of Widening partners, instruments updates, role of advanced partners, relation H2020-ESIF**. [For more information](#)

“READ ME” – RECOMMENDED PUBLICATIONS

GENERAL:

Collaboration and networks: EU13 participation in international science

The European Commission Stairway to Excellence (S2E) initiative aims to assist to EU Member States (MSs) and Regions in promoting R&I excellence across Europe. Work undertaken by the project identified several issues required to build R&I capacity in EU13 Member States. Amongst these issues was the need to improve research collaboration with EU15 Member States. **The objective of this JRC Policy Insight is to better understand the research links of EU13 countries and the policy implications.**

[For more information](#)

EU Funds working together for jobs and growth

Prepared by the European Commission publication describes the **rationale for developing links between the different funding sources** and explains how they can be combined. It showcases examples of synergies that have emerged at strategic, programming and project implementation levels and also highlights initiatives with a high potential for synergies. [For more information](#)

European Innovation Scoreboard 2017

The European Innovation Scoreboard provides a comparative analysis of innovation performance in EU countries, other European countries, and regional neighbours. It assesses relative strengths and weaknesses of national innovation systems and helps countries identify areas they need to address. [For more information](#)