



Dear Readers,

The role of National Contact Points (NCPs) is a very important one, both in providing expertise and support to applicants as well as in active participating in local R&D ecosystems. NCP_WIDE.NET project as a forum gathering NCPs and enhancing their knowledge and experience in the field of Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation has just reached its half-way.

At this opportunity, an external customer satisfaction survey was conducted by independent consultants, with the aim to assess our activities and give us directions for the future.



The results appreciated our efforts to a significant extent. Just to give you a hint, the vast majority (approx. 85%) both of NCPs and other stakeholders confirmed the highest level of professionalism of NCP_WIDE.NET and its services. Moreover, clients awarded the level of NCP professionalism and engagement with almost 90%.

The survey gave as good indications for the future with new services. Our offer will be then bigger and tailored towards new needs and opportunities.

At this stage, on behalf of the NCP_WIDE.NET, I would to thank you all for great collaboration and wish successful future actions. Please enjoy the 3rd issue of our newsletter.

Katarzyna Walczyk-Matuszyk
NCP_WIDE.NET project coordinator

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Widening Fellowships

Widening Fellowships were introduced as a response to low success rates in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships (MSCA IF), submitted by experienced researchers with **host institutions based in widening countries**. In order to shorten the gap between more and less performing countries, the latter ones expressed a need to launch a mechanism that would help them to increase their participation in H2020 projects, and hence to increase their potential by attracting the most talented researchers and trigger brain circulation and knowledge exchange.

From this year on, the MSCA IF applicants whose proposals were scored above the threshold but were not funded due to budget limits, will automatically be redirected to the Widening Fellowship (WF) call, unless they wish to opt-out. This means there will be no separate application to these fellowships. The applicants will apply to MSCA IF call.

The Widening Fellowship scheme is foreseen for four panels of the European Fellowships:

- **Standard European Fellowships (ST)** fellowships divided into eight scientific areas: CHE, SOC, ECO, ENG, ENV, LIF, MAT, PHY;
- **Career Restart Panel (CAR)** multidisciplinary panel for researchers who intend to resume their research in Europe after a career break (e.g. after parental leave, working outside research, etc.);
- **Reintegration Panel (RI)** multidisciplinary panel for researchers who wish to return and reintegrate in a long term position in Europe;
- **Society and Enterprise Panel (SE)** multidisciplinary panel for researchers who apply with a host institution from non-academic sector.

Global Fellowships, with mandatory outgoing phase in a non-associated third country, are excluded from the scheme.

Widening Fellowships

Eligible applicants are experienced researchers of any nationality, who at the call deadline have either a PhD degree or at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience.

Researchers have to meet the mobility rule, i.e. they may not apply with an institution based in a country in which they have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) for more than 12 months in the three years immediately prior to the call deadline (for ST panel) or for more than 36 months the five years immediately prior to the call deadline (for CAR, RI, SE panels).

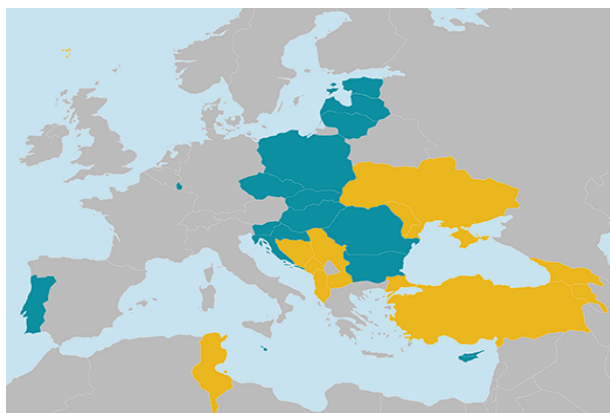


Illustration: *Widening Fellowship countries*

The call will be launched on 12 April 2018 with **deadline of 12 September 2018**. The budget allocations for the three upcoming calls are as follow:

- 2018: 5 mln €;
- 2019: 6 mln €;
- 2020: 7 mln €.

Since Widening Fellowships is a part of Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation Work Programme, and not the MSCA programme, the fellows will not be considered as MSC Fellows. However, they will still be able to pursue their research in Europe and develop their careers under the same conditions as MSC Fellows.

Author: Magdalena Chomicka, MSCA NCP, Poland

NEWS FROM COST AND OUTLOOK TO THE FUTURE



WHAT IS COST ALL ABOUT

COST Programme - European Cooperation in Science & Technology - is the longest-running EU-funded programme created in 1971. It enables researchers to set up their interdisciplinary research networks in Europe and beyond through so-called Actions (thematic research driven projects). Actions must involve at least 7 participants and are open to researchers from universities, public and private research institutions as well as NGOs, industry and SMEs.

COST provides funds for organising conferences, meetings, training schools, short scientific exchanges and other networking activities.

The actual research costs are financed either by participants themselves or co-financed from national budgets, e.g. Switzerland has a COST-dedicated budget-line, or Czech Republic has a special programme called INTER-COST.

All Member States are full COST members, with Israel being the only Cooperating State.

COST receives funding from Horizon 2020 programme (€ 300 mil. in total) from two Work Programmes: SC6 Europe in a changing world — Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies (around € 20 mil. each year to reinforce its networking activities) and SEWP (around € 20 mil. each year to foster inclusive policy).

NEWS FROM COST AND OUTLOOK TO THE FUTURE

NEW COST MEASURES

COST programme gradually introduces new measures to widen European research base and support capacity building. Among them there are the following:

ITC CONFERENCE GRANTS

Conference grant is a new COST Action networking tool and it gives specific support to PhD students and Early-Career Investigators (ECI) from participating “Inclusiveness Target Countries” (ITC) to attend international S&T related conferences that are not organised by a COST Action. Any e-COST user mentioned above who is affiliated with an institution located in an ITC country participating in the Action can submit an application request for this kind of grant (at least 45 days before the conference start date). All other details including the type of supporting documents, approval and payments are available in the [User guide](#) published in April 2017.

COST ACADEMY

[COST Academy](#) was launched in September 2017 and it offers dedicated training and mentoring to boost the leadership, management, administrative and communications skills of young and/or ICT researchers. Trainings take place at the Brussels COST office and are led by COST and external experts, combining theory with practical exercises and involving best practice cases.

COST Academy includes: Main proposers’ workshops; Leadership workshops; Grant holder workshops; and Science communication and media training.

Future COST Academy events are displayed [here](#). Online courses are to be added on COST website during 2018, including mentoring for grant holders and for Action Chairs and Action Vice-Chairs.

NEWS FROM COST AND OUTLOOK TO THE FUTURE

COST CONNECT

COST Connect is a series of thematic workshops that provide open space for researchers, policy makers and research and innovation stakeholders to network and develop their ideas. The topics of workshops are defined around specific criteria taking into account stakeholders' input and highlighted needs, the current EU policy agenda, major societal challenges and research fields where a critical mass of COST Actions is involved.

The interactive format of these events encourages dialogue, active engagement, creation of synergies and brainstorming. This event concept reduces fragmentation and makes research more efficient by avoiding duplication. More information on thematic workshops is available [here](#).

OUTLOOK TO FP9

To prepare COST for the next Framework Programme (2021-2027), the Committee of Senior Officials (in the presence of Director-General for Research and Innovation Robert-Jan Smits) approved in December 2017 its [Strategic Plan](#) that will drive COST throughout the end of Horizon 2020 and the next Framework Programme (FP9).

COST will focus on three strategic priorities: promoting and spreading excellent research; fostering interdisciplinary research for breakthrough science; and empowering and retaining young researchers and innovators. Regarding the FP9, COST requests a total budget of € 600 mil. (twice as much as in H2020), but promises to double the funded new Action every year (up to 75) with more than 625 running networks a year (more than doubling the current figure). A COST Innovators Grant scheme for exploring innovation potential will be developed.

NEWS FROM COST AND OUTLOOK TO THE FUTURE

Due to its proven track-record of networking researchers across Europe and its success in reaching out to researchers and innovators in the less-research and innovation intensive countries, COST can play a significant role in supporting the instruments of SEWP programme in H2020 and its successor in FP9.

FURTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Webinar “The COST programme – What’s in it for your clients?”

This online training organised by NCP Academy, COST and Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG) in April 2017 provided information on structure and procedures of the COST programme including the obligation to include “Inclusiveness Target Countries” (ITC), presented Success Stories and good practices of cooperation between H2020 NCPs and COST National Coordinators (CNCs). Further details and presentations are available [here](#).

Interested in Actions led by your country or involving your participants? Just go to COST website dedicated to [COST Member States](#) where you can either download the brochure “Country Fact Sheets” (a sheet for each country with figures, statistics and examples of Actions led by a country) or by choosing a specific country you will immediately know how many Actions are chaired, in which of these your country participate and who is your CNC.

NCP_WIDE.NET network published in 2017 a practical publication:

[“How to participate in the Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation activities”](#).

It provides advice and recommendations on how to participate in the calls on Teaming, Twinning, ERA Chairs and COST. The guide presents examples of funded projects and success stories.

Author: Anna Vosečková, WIDESPREAD NCP, CZ

A new Teaming Centre: FunGlass Center of innovation at the Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín, Slovakia

Alexander Dubček University's FunGlass Centre was selected for funding under the European framework program Horizon 2020. The Center, led by a team of the University's Centre of excellence for ceramics, glass and silicate materials, headed by prof. Galusek, was selected out 160 submitted proposals to be one of ten funded Teaming projects in the European Union, to spread excellence.

As part of this programme, the Centre will receive financial support of 15 M€ for the period of 2017-2023, designed to mainly upgrade the existing Centre to become an internationally recognized research institute for functional and surface functionalized glass – FunGLASS.

The new FunGlass center will create 44 new jobs for highly qualified research personnel and administration staff as well as attract an influx of experts from other countries, with the aim of building a multidisciplinary, creative, and highly competitive and motivating research environment.

The FunGlass center will provide an extensive training program for researchers and PhD students, familiarizing them with the environment and research culture at advanced partners' institutions, honing attendees' skills to international standards, which afterwards will be transferred back to their home institution making them "ambassadors" of international research skills to other institutions in the Slovak Republic.



A new Teaming Centre: FunGlass Center of innovation at the Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín, Slovakia

The success of this project is attributed to a close cooperation with leading experts and institutions in glass science and technology in Europe, namely Prof. Enrico Bernardo from the Università degli Studi di Padova (Italy), Prof. Aldo Boccaccini from the Friedrich – Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany), Prof. Alicia Durán from the Instituto de Cerámica y Vidrio Madrid (Spain), and Prof. Lothar Wondraczek from the Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena (Germany), who are also the partners and members of the project consortium.



Photo: Kick-off meeting at TNUAD in Trenčín

Source: FunGlass

The establishment of the Centre is also supported by leading glass producers in the Slovak republic, namely Johns Manville Trnava, RONA Lednické Rovne, and Vetropack Nemšová, as well as professional organizations such as Slovak Glass Society, Czech Glass Society, Union of Glass Industry of the Slovak republic, and International Commission on Glass, the most important organization comprising 33 national organizations and unions of glass science and technology from all around the globe.

Furthermore, following inclusion in this European framework program, the center received a letter of commitment from the former minister of education, science, research and sports of the Slovak republic, Mr. Peter Plavčan, that promised the Centre will receive additional funding from the Operational program Research and Innovations of at least 10 M€ for upgrade and extension of its research facilities.

A new Teaming Centre: FunGlass Center of innovation at the Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín, Slovakia

On March 1, 2017 the FunGlass center was launched, focusing on research and innovation in the field of glass with specific functional properties; luminescent, electric, sorption and comprised of new types of bioglasses and bioglass-based composites for personalized health care. Such materials can be used as implants for bone or soft tissues replacement and regeneration, materials for generation of energy from renewable sources (photovoltaics), glasses with specialized coatings with antibacterial, photocatalytic and self-cleaning properties, reflective and anti-reflection coatings, ultra-strong glasses, production of high value added materials from waste, just to name a few.

As a result, the University of Trenčín recognized FunGlass as an independent research Centre with a specific status in the framework of the University, with personal, financial and research autonomy. Nevertheless, the process of establishing the FunGlass center was not without difficulties to overcome, such as some cases incompatibility between the legislation of the Slovak republic, the European Union and the rules and requirements of the programme. However, the most serious hurdle that the Center is still facing is the lagging national co-funding, which threatens the project timeframes, training programs, research activities and even posing a risk of funds suspension by the Horizon 2020 program.

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JPI Urban Europe — Get Acquainted



JPI Urban Europe connects public authorities, civil society, scientists, innovators, business and industry to create an environment for urban research and innovation. The JPI offers experimental zones and long-term research infrastructures. Its mission is to develop tools, knowledge and platforms for dialogue on urban transitions.

Since 2010, when JPI Urban Europe was formally endorsed by the European Council, the societal challenge of sustainable urbanisation has received much political attention, for example through the dedicated urban dimension (SDG 11) in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals or through the Urban Agenda for the EU. The JPI Urban Europe responds to these Global Urban Challenges by developing Joint European Solutions.



Photo: JPI Project Catalogue.
Source: JPI

The JPI's projects are published [here](#).

JPI Urban Europe — Get Acquainted

JPI Urban Europe is committed to address the complexity of urban transitions by funding strategic research and innovation, improving and aligning R&I instruments, moderating science-policy processes and supporting transnational collaboration for local capacity building. Governments and funding organisations from 20 European countries join forces in several actions based on the portfolio of urban-related programmes and activities in each country.

In this sense, JPI Urban Europe functions as a platform to connect and build upon these various programmes to benefit from experiences and competences across borders. Our ambition is to go beyond the state-of-the-art of more conventional R&I programmes, to provide experimental zones for researchers, innovators, city authorities, civil society, policy makers and research funders.

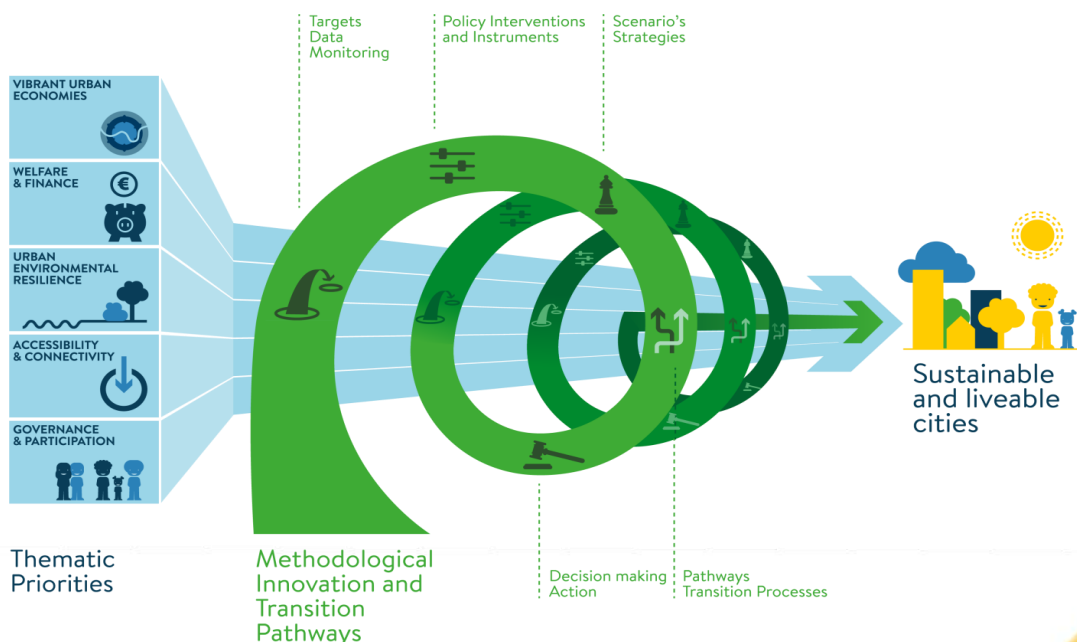


Illustration: *Transition towards sustainable and livable urban futures*

Source: JPI

JPI Urban Europe — Get Acquainted

Since 2012, JPI Urban Europe has not only funded more than 65 high quality projects. Arranging workshops, conferences and various fora for dialogue and exchange, JPI Urban Europe is working its way towards the vision of becoming the preferred discussion partner for urban policy-makers on local, national and international levels.

For achieving this vision one of its priorities is to involve all European countries. The JPI's widening strategy focuses on informing and engaging research funders as well as research organisations, cities and other stakeholders from all European and Associated countries. As JPI Urban Europe is currently updating its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda. Now is the time to contribute to the agenda setting for the next years and to prepare your national and local communities for future cooperation.

Through the JPI's online consultation and upcoming Stakeholder Dialogue which takes place on **24-25 April 2018** in Bucharest, JPI Urban Europe invites urban stakeholders to co-create the strategic agenda with them.

Online consultation:

<http://surveymonkey.com/r/sria2>

Invitation to Stakeholder Dialogue:

<https://jpi-urbaneurope.eu/event-calendar/agora-strategic-dialogue/>

More info: www.jpi-urbaneurope.eu or contact us at info@jpi-urbaneurope.eu

Author: Margit Noll

Chair of the JPI Urban Europe Management Board

Forthcoming Calls

An upcoming call for Horizon 2020 pillar: **Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation** has been announced by the European Commission. A budget of roughly 165 Million euros will become available for coordinators from widening countries to address the measures such as coordination or support services, mutual learning exercises and studies, networking as well as dissemination, awareness-raising and communication.

Forthcoming **calls are foreseen to be opened by 15th of May** and deadline is set for 15th of November, allowing more than a half a year for the consortia to submit competitive proposals. The greatest share of the budget is dedicated to the Teaming Phase 2 call. This will be the final Phase 2 call within the multiannual Horizon 2020 programme for centres of excellence to gain recognition and maturity. See the detailed timeline of the calls on page 16. It should be noted that **ERA Chair call 2019** will be opened already this year on 26th of July, and the deadline of the call is on 15 November 2018.

For more information please visit [EC participant portal on open calls](#).



Forthcoming Events

24th Annual EARMA Conference

When: April 16th -18th **Where:** Brussels

The European Association of Research Managers and Administrators conference will focus on the case studies of interventions from around Europe to build research supporting activities including those in constrained environments. More information on: www.earmaconference.com

WIRE 2018

When: July 4th - 6th **Where:** Innsbruck

The Week of Innovative Regions in Europe will address, develop and progress key topics of interest to the community. It contributes largely to the important task for all potential actors in H2020's WPs to network and be connected, spread Research and Innovation excellence and connect regions and people. More information on: www.wire2018.eu

ESOF 2018

When: July 9th - 14th **Where:** Toulouse

The **EuroScience** Open Forum invites leading scientists, researchers, young researchers, business people, entrepreneurs and innovators, policy makers, science and technology communicators and the general public from all over Europe to discuss new discoveries and debate over the directions that research in Europe is taking. More information on: www.esof.eu

Forthcoming Events

European Week of Regions and Cities 2018

When: October 8th - 11th **Where:** Brussels

The European Week of Regions and Cities is a key platform to gather and present the views of European regions and cities on both budget and legislative proposals related to the Cohesion Policy and rural development, as well as discuss the future of Europe in a regional and local perspective. More information on

www.ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/regions-and-cities



“READ ME” – RECOMMENDED PUBLICATIONS

GENERAL:



Europe is back: Accelerating breakthrough innovation

The independent High-Level Group of Innovators has published its recommendations on how the European Innovation Council (EIC) should fund and nurture breakthrough innovation from start-up to scale-up. Their recommendations imply that Europe should act FAST:

Funding: empower the innovator, simplify, incentivise private investment

Awareness: champion innovators, communicate success

Scale: build the camp, leverage European ecosystems

Talent: connect people, create prestige for innovators

[More information](#)




Horizon 2020 interim evaluation: maximising the impact of EU research and innovation

The Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions, includes eight lessons aimed to maximise the impact of future framework programmes. These lessons are of great importance as the discussions on the Ninth Framework Programme have already started.

[More information](#)

“READ ME” – RECOMMENDED PUBLICATIONS

GENERAL:



Obstacles & solutions for better integration of all EU regions into Space EU funded Programmes

This panel discussion took place during Space International Information Day and Brokerage Event in Warsaw on 14 December 2017, which was organized by SPACE NCP Network –COSMOS2020 and National Contact Point for Research Programmes of the EU.

[More information](#)



Mission-oriented research & innovation in the European Union

The European Commission, through Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, invited Professor Mazzucato to draw up strategic recommendations to maximise the impact of the future EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation through mission-oriented policy. This report is the result of Professor Mazzucato’s reflections based on her research with inputs through a consultation process with internal and external stakeholders of the European Commission.

[More information](#)

ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE NEW HORIZON 2020 DASHBOARD?

The new Horizon 2020 Dashboard on the Horizon 2020 Participant Portal is an online presentation of implementation data of Horizon 2020. The Dashboard is user-friendly and offers new powerful analytical functions.

At this stage, the Dashboard provides two sets of functionalities:

- Aggregated data on participation in proposals (be advised: detailed proposal data are not accessible due to confidentiality conditions)
- Aggregated and detailed data on funded projects (one may look for specific information according to the ID call, type of action, partner type, Country statistics, and much more) .

On top of that, the former “Find a Project” was uplifted to “Success Stories”, with the most recent success stories from the EU Research.

[Horizon 2020 Dashboard](#)



Source: Horizon 2020 Dashboard