Spreading Excellence and Widening participation in Horizon 2020

Dr Stefan WEIERS
Directorate General for Research and Innovation, B5 Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation
European Commission

CESAER Annual Seminar 2014 “Widening Participation” Tallinn, 16 October 2014
The Innovation Divide

Figure 2: Regional performance groups RIS 2014

Map created with Region Map Generator
R&D expenditure in the business sector as % of GDP
Background

• Disparities in research excellence and innovation performance >>> barrier to competitiveness, growth and jobs across Europe

• Some countries are experiencing low participation (success) in the EU Framework Programmes because of:

  ➢ insufficient national R&D investments
  ➢ lack of synergies between national research systems and the EU research landscape
  ➢ Differential wage level between countries
  ➢ system learning effects
  ➢ Existing networks constituting barriers to entry
  ➢ Large projects can be problematic for small countries and new actors
  ➢ problems with information, communication and training
Some Milestones

- Midterm evaluation of FP7 in 2010 found imbalanced participation in the programme across European countries and regions
- Discussions in Council and Parliament about creating "stairways to excellence", various member states and MEP initiatives
- Council request to Commission in March 2011 to analyse reasons
- Informal Councils in Gödöllő (April 2011) and Sopot (July 2011)
- Dedicated workshop with senior representatives of the Member States in Brussels in September 2011
- Commission analysis on low participation (September 2011) submitted to Council
- Negotiation of H2020 legislative package 2012/2013
- Cohesion policy package 2014-2020 adopted in November 2013
- Horizon 2020 adopted in December 2013 including dedicated "widening pillar"
Strategic goals for Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation in Horizon 2020

• Introducing measures for raising research and innovation performance in the major part of the catching-up economies of the EU

• Contributing to:
  • Better investment in RTDI (INVEST)
  • Structural reforms in the Research and Innovation Systems at national and regional level (REFORM)
  • Transforming the institutional landscape in RTDI towards better performance (TRANSFORM)
Strategic challenges for Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation in Horizon 2020

- Tension between the principle of excellence and objective of cohesion in Europe
- Finding the right balance between competition and co-operation
- Establishing synergies with cohesion policy via smart specialisation (RIS3)
- Stairways to excellence
- Integration of research institutions both into regional innovation ecosystems and global value chains
- Contribute to a well-functioning and diversified research system in target countries
Actions for WIDENING PARTICIPATION under H2020

New set of measures in Horizon 2020 under the separate specific objective "Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation" (WIDESPREAD):

- Teaming for Excellence
- Twinning (institutional networking)
- ERA Chairs (bringing excellence to institutions)
- NCPs (information, communication, support)
- Policy Support Facility (support for R&I Policy design)
- COST (stimulating cross border science networks) run under intergovernmental framework

Widening actions will also create synergies between R&I (H2020) and Cohesion Policies (ESIF) notably through Smart Specialisation

Total Budget in H2020 ~ € 816 million
Widening Participation: Eligibility Criteria (1)*

Why?

• Political objective of Widening in H2020
• H2020 calls for a targeted approach to help participants with low R&I performance
• H2020 Framework & Specific Programme legislation: "low performing RDI Member States and regions”

How?

Eligibility Criterion: The Composite Indicator of Research Excellence
A Composite indicator of four variables:

• Highly cited publications of a country as a share of the top 10% most cited publications normalised by GDP
• Number of world class universities (in top 250) and public research institutes (in top 50) in a country normalised by population
• Patent applications per million population
• Total value of ERC grants received divided by public R&D performed by the higher education and government sectors

* not applicable for COST
Widening Participation: Eligibility Criteria (2)

- **Origin**: Developed by DG RTD & JRC, part of the IU progress at country level 2013 publication & included in the **IU Competitiveness Report 2013**.

- **Definition**: "A composite indicator developed to measure the research excellence in Europe, meaning the effects of the European and national policies on the modernisation of research institutions, the vitality of the research environment and the quality of research outputs in both basic and applied research."

- **Threshold**: MS below 70% of the EU average

**“low RDI performing” Member States for Widening actions**: Latvia, Croatia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Romania, Luxembourg, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Portugal, Slovenia, Cyprus, Czech Republic and Hungary

**“low RDI performing” Associated Countries**: The same eligibility criteria apply for Associated Countries to H2020 (all WBC included)
TEAMING FOR EXCELLENCE – Creation of Centres of Excellence in two stages

Call 2014 ("Stage 1"): Business Plan for a Centre of Excellence (CoE)

**Budget:** € 11.85M

**Call deadline:** 17 September 2014

**Project Size:** €200.000 - €500.000 per proposal (indicative budget)

**Project Duration:** 12 months
Main deliverable: Business Plan of the Centre of Excellence

Development of a Business Plan for the new/upgraded Centre of Excellence facilitated by a teaming process with a leading counterpart in Europe. Proposals need to demonstrate the long-term science and innovation strategy of the future Centre based on a SWOT analysis.

Standard CSA funding

Business Plan with a robust financial commitment (from national/ESIF funds or any others)
Stage 2: Subject to the quality of the Business Plan and a commitment of the Member State (e.g. support via Cohesion Policy Funds), the Commission may provide further substantial financial support for the first steps of implementation of the Centre.

Evaluation of the Business Plan through a competitive review across partners by independent experts.
TEAMING FOR EXCELLENCE – STAGE 2

In 2016: ("Stage 2") Start-up/Implementation of the CoE

Budget: ~ € 80-90 M

Project Size: €15-20M (indicative budget)

Project Duration: 5-7 years
FUNDING – STAGE 2

"Stage 2" Start-up/Implementation of the CoE

Funding for:
Substantial support for the start-up & implementation phase of the CoE inter alia: salaries, operational and administrative costs, exchange of staff with advanced partners, training of staff, dissemination, only small equipment but no infrastructure and no funding for research projects

Synergies with Cohesion Funding or other sources to cover e.g. infrastructure or large equipment

Alignment with the national/regional Smart Specialisation Strategy
CONSORTIUM

At least 2 partners in each Teaming project:

(1) the participant organisation (COORDINATOR) from a low performing Member State or Associated Country (for example a research agency at national or regional level, or a regional authority);

(2) an institution of research and innovation excellence (public or private) or a consortium of such institutions (from all EU28 or AC), preferably from 'high RDI performing' Member States

Well-chosen, carefully structured long term partnership & strong engagement from both parties and the COO to be strong in project management
Teaming for Excellence

**Key Success Factors:**

- Well-chosen, carefully structured **partnership** & strong **engagement** from both parties

- **Long term vision** (at least 10-15 years) & **long term financial commitment nationally** (at least €40-50 M) from the outset

- Coordinator: Both strong in project management & strong in mobilising national/Cohesion funding

- **New CoE**: Eventual autonomy in decision-making is a must for sustained excellence

- **Alignment with the national/regional Smart Specialisation Strategy**: National/Regional authorities need to have finalised or be in the final stages of preparation of their S3 by autumn 2014

- **Synergies with Cohesion Funding**: Need to make appropriate conditional "space" in ESIF OPs to secure possible funding for Stage 2 (OPs are expected to be submitted to the EC in summer 2014)
- Overall budget for TEAMING in H2020 is

\(~ € 270 \text{ M}\)

- another call is planned in 2018
Twinning

What?
Strengthening a defined field of research of a knowledge institution in a low performing Member State or region through linking with at least two internationally-leading counterparts in Europe.

How?
Proposals: Will have to outline the scientific strategy for stepping up and stimulating scientific excellence and innovation capacity in a defined area of research as well as the scientific quality of the partners involved in the twinning exercise.

WHEN?
2 calls (2015 and 2018)
Twinning (2)

The Partners

• **ONE** institution located in a Low Performing MS/region (**COORDINATOR**)

• A minimum of **TWO** additional partners from two different Member States or Associated Countries.

Call 2015 Details:

- **Budget:** ~ € 64 M
- **Call Opening date:** 2 July 2014
- **Call deadline:** 7 May 2015 (to be confirmed)
- **Project Size:** €1 M per proposal

- **Project Duration:** 3 years

**Type of action:** Coordination and Support Action

**Total Budget for Twinning in H2020:** ~ € 100 M
Twinning (3)
Eligible Costs

Funding for:

• expert visits and short-term on-site or virtual training;
• workshops & conference attendance;
• organisation of joint summer school type activities;
• dissemination and outreach activities.

Equipment & researchers' salaries will NOT be funded.
1- WIDESPREAD 2-2014: ERA Chairs – Objectives of the action

• Bring high quality researchers and managers to universities and other research organisations with the potential for research excellence.

• Institutions should implement structural changes to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.
2- WIDESPREAD 2-2014: ERA Chairs

– Proposal design

• In any scientific domain of research and innovation but expected to be inline with regional/national strategies for smart specialisation.

• Shall comprise measures to foster compliance with ERA priorities (open recruitment, peer review, gender balance, innovative doctoral training).

• Include a plan to increase Research Capacity: measures for better use of the installed research capacity; description of any necessary investments in facilities and infrastructures and present a strategy to mobilise support for them (including possible support from Cohesion funds -ESIF).
3- WIDESPREAD 2-2014: ERA Chairs
- Expected Impact

- Increased attractiveness of institution and region for excellent researchers.
- Research excellence in the fields covered by the ERA Chair.
- Increase participation of the institution in Horizon 2020 and other internationally competitive funding programmes.
- Institutional changes to comply with ERA priorities.
- Contribution to regional and/or national smart specialisation strategies, including obtaining support where appropriate from European Structural and Investment Funds.
4- WIDESPREAD 2-2014: ERA Chairs
- The ERA Chair holder

- The ERA Chair holder should be an outstanding researcher and research manager with a proven record of leadership.

- The appointment of an ERA Chair holder must follow an open and merit-based recruitment process, and will be subject to monitoring by the European Commission.

- ERA Chair holder shall be designated as a full time position or equivalent contractual arrangement.

- The institution should ensure autonomy for the Chair and his/her team.

- ERA Chairs can be of any nationality.
5- WIDESPREAD 2-2014: ERA Chairs
- Eligibility Criteria and budget

• As for the other measures under Widening, applicant organisations shall be established in eligible Members States and Associated countries indicated in the Work Programme.

• One single applicant (mono-beneficiary action).

• EU contribution not to exceed a maximum of EUR 2,5 million for up to 5 years

• EU contribution is limited to a maximum of 90% of total estimated budget
WIDESPREAD 2-2014: ERA Chairs
- Budget

- **Salaries** of ERA Chairs and his/her team.
- Contribution towards measures aimed at facilitating structural changes at the institution.
  - ERA priorities,
  - Costs including training, meetings, publication and patenting costs, equipment (in duly justified cases), etc.

The grant is not a measure to fund research *per se* and will **not** cover research costs!
7- WIDESPREAD 2: ERA Chairs Calls

• A total of 3 calls are foreseen during H2020 with a total budget of EUR 240 million

  **Provisonal call deadlines:** 2014; 2017 and 2019

  **Indicative budget:** 1st call EUR 34 million; 2nd EUR 100 million and 3rd EUR 110 million

• Widespread 2-2014: 1st Call Open since 11 December 2013!

  **Call deadline:** 15 October 2014 => Proposals evaluated by **December 2014**

  **EU contribution:** maximum of EUR 2,5 million for up to 5 years

  **Funding scheme:** CSA-SA (Supporting Action)
Policy Support Facility (PSF)

SCOPE: To improve the design and implementation of R&I policies by offering (voluntary basis) services & expert advice to policymakers at national/regional level:

1. An innovation database of R&I policy case studies
2. an innovation helpdesk to guide/support users (either through the innovation database or by helping them to formulate a policy support request)
3. innovation missions to address specific policy-support requests
4. dissemination activities, incl. newsletters and events for policy mutual learning

Budget Split: (50% SC6 & 50% Widening)

Actions under WIDENING: target "low RDI performing MS" through dedicated policy support/on site missions/ dissemination activities
COST – Facts and Figures:

- Intergovernmental Framework for transnational Cooperation in Science and Technology
- Success story since 1971
- Networking of nationally funded research projects-> up-scaling and leveraging effects
- bottom-up and excellence principle -> open to all disciplines, science and technology (S&T) ideas and to all categories of partners
- Reaches far beyond EU-> 35 COST Member States + Near Neighbourhood Countries + International Partners
- On average 20 countries per networking action, duration 4 years
- EU funding 250 Million € under FP7 and 300 Million under H2020 (tentatively)
- Aligned with H2020 work programmes on "Widening Participation and Spreading Excellence" & "Europe in a Changing world – inclusive, reflective and innovative societies"
- New implementing structure -> COST AISBL (international non-profit association)
COST Key Principles

- Supporting excellence
- Being open
- Being inclusive

COST Driving Forces

- Fostering new ideas
- Sharing knowledge
- Output orientation
How do COST Actions work?

Researchers network and collaborate within the Actions using different networking tools:

- Management Meetings
- Working Group Meetings
- Scientific Workshops and Seminars
- Training Schools
- Short Scientific Exchange Visits (STSMs)
- Dissemination and Publications
- Other networking tools, as appropriate
How does COST contribute to widening?

- Proven success record for integration of new players from less RTD performing countries into European research activities
- Based on dedicated Inclusiveness Policy
- Low hurdle entry gate for excellent researchers from widening countries due to openness and bottom-up principle
- Connecting pockets of excellence
- In H2020 particular incentives to foster participation from inclusiveness/widening countries
- Particular strategic actions will be developed
- Widening will be a strategic priority for the governance board of COST (i.e. CSO Committee of Senior Officials)
- But: No closed shop or silos exclusively for widening!
COST “inclusiveness” Countries *

EU 13:
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Hungary
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Malta
- Poland
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia

EU Candidates:
- FYR Macedonia
- Republic of Serbia
- Turkey

EU Potential Candidate:
- Bosnia and Herzegovina

EU Countries targeted by EC:
- Luxembourg
- Portugal

* Countries eligible for widening measures under COST in line with H2020 Widening work programme based on RTDI performance composit indicator
Contact
Ms. Katalin Alfoldi
Policy Officer
COST – European Cooperation in Science and Technology
Avenue Louise 149
1050 Brussels, Belgium
T: +32 (0)2 533 3800
F: +32(0)2 533 3890
Katalin.Alfoldi@cost.eu

Get COST News by e-mail by signing up at:
www.cost.eu/notification

www.facebook.com/COST.Programme
twitter.com/COSToffice
www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=1699127
www.youtube.com/user/COSTOffice
COST Opportunities:

- Proven intergovernmental networking scheme with leveraging and structuring effect on nationally funded research projects
- Strong potential to improve connectivity and integration of excellent researchers from widening/inclusiveness countries
- Bottom-up and openness principles facilitate easy access for newcomers to European research activities
- Different entry gates
- COST networking actions may prepare the ground for larger and long term research partnerships by building trust
- Potential incubators for emerging fields and new research strands across disciplinary borders
- Need to develop strategic actions and incentives for widening countries
Conclusions

- H2020 offers diversified portfolio of actions to respond to participation imbalances and innovation divide
- Scalable to specific demand, ranging from light and flexible networking (COST) to long term close partnerships creating tangible assets (Teaming)
- From capacity building towards real integration
- Mandatory alignment with regional/national smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) for EU MS and equivalent national/regional RTD strategies
- Challenge to reconcile excellence and cohesion principles
Learn more:

**Spreading Excellence & Widening Participation Info Day 3 July 2014**

Brussels:  

Participant Portal:  

**Horizon 2020**  

**Cohesion policy (2014-20)**  
Thank you for your attention