

Horizon 2020

Work Programme 2018-20

15. Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

DRAFT

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Introduction

Despite serious efforts deployed at national and European level, the Union sees significant internal disparities in terms of research and innovation performance.

There is significant evidence pointing to the fact that the pathway to economic growth and competitiveness is largely connected to research and innovation. To tap into Europe's yet unexploited potential in research and innovation a stronger participation in Horizon 2020 coupled with greater commitment by the low-performing Member States and Associated Countries can be instrumental. This focus will enable the European Research Area to function in a more streamlined and homogeneous way, where the individual strengths of every Member State and Associated Country may be optimised.

Furthermore, research and innovation performance is correlated with the efficiency of the national research and innovation systems. Technical assistance and expertise is needed for those low performing Member States and Associated Countries to improve their research and innovation systems and policies.

In addition, participation in the EU Framework Programmes is increasingly dependent on networking and staying connected with partners across the EU. It is imperative for those pockets of excellence in Europe to enter and remain on the "framework programmes grid", thus facilitating access to networks and partnering opportunities.

In order to address the above challenges of research and innovation (R&I) investments, efficiency of national research and innovation systems and networking, Horizon 2020 introduces specific measures for spreading excellence and widening participation through engaging organisations of those countries which could commit more towards the EU research and innovation effort. This will greatly enhance competitiveness.

The Work programme is in line with the Horizon 2020 Responsible Research and Innovation¹ (RRI) cross-cutting issue, engaging society, integrating the gender and ethical dimensions, ensuring the access to research outcomes and encouraging formal and informal science education.

Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) is the on-going process of aligning research and innovation to the values, needs and expectations of society which allows to identify and to deliver new solutions to the societal challenges. In this process it is not only matter to engage the traditional stakeholders and partners but to engage wider the civil society and citizens to participate to definition and implementation of research and innovation policy agenda and activities. Therefore RRI policy approach is to be taken into account as well, at local and regional levels, when relevant, in the processes on how to improve and optimise the outcomes of the research and innovation activities presented in the submitted proposals.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/rome_declaration_RRI_final_21_November.pdf

The ethical dimension of the activities undertaken should be analysed and taken into account, including relevant socioeconomic implications. This implies the respect of ethical principles and related legislation during the implementation. Whenever possible, the activities should also include in their objectives a better understanding and handling of the ethical aspects as well as the promotion of the highest ethical standards in the field and among the actors and stakeholders. The most common issues to be considered include: personal data protection and privacy, protection of participants and researchers, ensuring informed consent, dual use and potential misuse of the research results, fair benefit sharing when developing countries are involved, environment protection, etc.

The specific policy requirements, scope and perspectives of the actions covered under the Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation Part necessitate specific geographical eligibility conditions, in order to maximise their real value and impact.

In particular, it is considered that research excellence is a key factor for research and innovation performance and for successful participation in Framework Programmes. Therefore, to serve the ultimate objectives of these actions it is necessary to target those which are low performing in terms of research excellence.

The Composite indicator of Research Excellence² (with a corrective threshold of 70% of the EU average) has been selected to distinguish those countries identified as **"low R&I performing" or "Widening" countries**. These are:

Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Associated Countries (subject to valid association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020): Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

The actions funded through this work programme are therefore mostly targeting organisations and institutions in the above countries and are described below:

Teaming will invest in Europe's research and innovation potential through supporting the creation of new (or upgrading of existing) Centres of Excellence in low R&I performing Member States and Associated Countries on the basis of partnerships with internationally leading institutions.

Twinning aims to build on the huge potential of networking for excellence through knowledge transfer and, exchange of best practice between research institutions and leading partners.

² The detailed scores of the composite indicator can be found in p. 5 (Excellence in S&T 2010) of the "Research and Innovation Performance in EU Member States and Associated Countries 2013" at http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/innovation_union_progress_at_country_level_2013.pdf

ERA Chairs will bring outstanding researchers to universities and other research organisations, in those countries, that have high potential for research excellence to help them attract, maintain and increase high quality human resources and implement the structural changes necessary to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.

Efforts to improve the international experience and networking capacities of peripheral institutions will be made by stimulating their participation with cross-border science networks through dedicated *COST* activities, connecting unexploited pockets of excellence throughout Europe.

JPI Urban Europe enhances the knowledge and capacities in order to support urban transition towards sustainability in Europe and beyond. Under this Work Programme, efforts to extend the participation of low R&I performing Member States in JPI Urban Europe will be undertaken further.

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Call - WIDESPREAD

H2020-WIDESPREAD-2018-2020

Proposals are invited against the following topic(s):

WIDESPREAD-01-2018-2019: Teaming Phase 2

Specific Challenge: Despite a recent trend for the research and innovation performance of individual countries in the EU to converge, sharp differences among Member States still remain. These disparities are due to, among other reasons, the insufficient critical mass of science and lack of centres of excellence having sufficient competence to engage countries and regions strategically in a path of innovative growth, building on newly developed capabilities. Exploiting the potential of Europe's talent pool by maximising and spreading the benefits of research and innovation across the Union is vital for Europe's competitiveness and its ability to address societal challenges in the future. This could help countries and regions that are lagging behind in terms of research and innovation performance to attain a competitive position in the global value chains.

Teaming will support the creation of new centres of excellence or upgrading the existing ones in low R&I performing countries, building on partnerships between leading scientific institutions and partner institutions in low R&I performing countries, that display the willingness to engage together for this purpose.

Scope:

Teaming involves in principle, two (2) parties:

- (1) The main applicant organisation (the coordinator) established in a "Widening" country that must be either a national/regional authority or a research funding agency or a university or a research organisation.
- (2) A university or research organisation with an international reputation in research and innovation excellence.

The proposal for Teaming Phase 2 must:

- Illustrate the scientific and innovation potential of the future Centre of Excellence
- Demonstrate the growth potential of the Centre of Excellence for the benefit of the country or region
- Elaborate on the structure of the partnership and on the strong engagement of the partners
- Demonstrate how the newly established/upgraded Centre will have full autonomy in decision making. In particular, the Centre of Excellence should have the maximum degree of autonomy in terms of taking its own decisions, being in legal, administrative, operational,

personnel and academic matters. The Centre should be able to set and pay competitive salaries for its personnel.

- Elaborate on the steps that will be taken to ensure long term self-sustainability after the end of the Horizon 2020 project.

- Propose a robust human resource strategy, ensuring appropriate administrative and management capacities for the effective and efficient running of the Centre of Excellence.

- Include the letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding from the interested national/regional authorities or other private sources to commit financial resources (e.g. resources coming from the European Structural and Investment Funds or Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) funds as appropriate) for implementing the future Centre, in particular regarding investment in infrastructure and equipment. The letter(s) of Commitment for complementary funding (a template will be provided by the Commission in due time) of the project will be an integral part of the evaluation of the proposal taking into consideration:

- the nature of the commitment,
- the legal form of the commitment (what kind of legal scheme supports the financial commitment),
- the specific amount of the commitment and its expected impact on the establishment of the centre (the total amount of the complementary funding must be at least at the same level or more than the total Horizon 2020 funding requested),
- the level of certainty that the relevant funds would be indeed available to that specific Centre.

How the complementary funding will be spent during the project has to be explained in detail in the proposal, both in the budget table of Part A as well as with a clear and detailed cost breakdown of the activities funded in Part B.

Procedure for Teaming Phase 2:

Teaming Phase 2 is a restricted call open only to:

- a. Applicants successfully funded under the topic WIDESPREAD-04-2017: Teaming Phase 1.
- b. Applicants who have concluded a Framework Partnership Agreement under the topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014 but have not concluded a Specific Grant Agreement under the topic WIDESPREAD-01-2016-2017: Teaming Phase 2.

For both points a. and b. above, in order not to put in doubt the result of the initial evaluation (Teaming Phase 1), the internationally leading ("advanced") institution(s) partners in the proposal must remain the same as in Phase 1.

A change of the partners from the widening country for Phase 2 is only allowed in clear-cut cases such as where there might be a conflict of interest or a new legal entity for the Centre of Excellence is created. A detailed explanation for such a change has to be elaborated as part of the proposal for Phase 2.

Successful applicants under topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014 and topic WIDESPREAD-04-2017: Teaming Phase 1 of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2016-2017 have received a grant to produce an extensive, detailed and robust Business Plan within a timeframe of 12 months for the setting-up/upgrading of a Centre of Excellence. Based on the business plan developed during Phase 1, applicants are expected to submit a separate proposal for Teaming Phase 2. The proposal is expected to reflect all key elements of the business plan.

Nevertheless, it is emphasised that the Business Plan is the deliverable of Teaming Phase 1 and will not be subject to evaluation under Phase 2 (neither it will be made available to evaluators).

Applicants to this call will have to submit a proposal, following the template that will be made available to applicants through the submission tool. The submitted proposals under this restricted call will undergo an independent evaluation, and those selected for funding will be awarded a CSA grant (Teaming Phase 2).

This new grant for Teaming Phase 2 will provide substantial support for the start-up and implementation phase of the future Centre of Excellence. This will cover mainly administrative and operational costs as well as personnel costs of the future Centre of Excellence. While the action does not focus on equipment and consumables, these could be accepted if they constitute only a minor part of the total Horizon 2020 funding requested and may be deemed necessary to fulfil the action's specific scope and objective.

It is to be noted, that Horizon 2020 under the Teaming action will not support infrastructure costs associated with the new or upgraded centre. Such costs are expected to be supported by other types of funding, including where relevant by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) or the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) funds.

For grants awarded under this topic and type of action the following cost categories will be ineligible costs:

- infrastructure costs.

The respective option of Article 6.5.C of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied. Such costs are expected to be supported by other types of funding, including where relevant by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) or the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) funds.

The duration of a Teaming Phase 2 project will be between 5 to 7 years.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of EUR 15 million, would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting lower amounts.

Expected Impact: The creation of new (or significant upgrades of existing) Centres of Excellence in "Widening" Countries through the Teaming partnerships is expected to:

- increase the scientific capabilities of these countries and enable them to engage in a strategic growth path pointing to long-term opportunities for economic development.
- through improved scientific capabilities allow these countries to improve their chances to seek competitive funding in international fora (including the EU Framework Programmes).
- over the medium to long term achieve a measurable and significant improvement in terms of research and innovation culture (as shown through indicators such as research intensity, innovation performance, values and attitudes towards research and innovation) of those countries.
- reinforce the potential impact of the new/upgraded Centre of Excellence in terms of sustained excellence through projected measurable key performance and output related indicators.

It should be explained how the leading scientific institutions in the partnership will contribute in terms of provision of access to new research avenues, creativity and the development of new approaches, as well as acting as a source for increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

The benefits for the internationally leading scientific institutions and the way they would materialise through the partnership should be substantiated.

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.

WIDESPREAD-02-2018: Support to JPI Urban Europe³

Specific Challenge:

In tackling societal challenges in the area of sustainable urbanisation, fragmented national research and innovation programmes represent an obstacle for European collaboration. In some countries, in particular in the Widening countries, the situation has led to an underrepresentation of such countries in transnational collaboration. The different national

³ This activity directly aimed at supporting public-public partnerships with Member States and associated countries, is excluded from the delegation to REA and will be implemented by the Commission services.

research and innovation systems, approaches and instruments in these countries also add to the challenge. Furthermore, urban policy-making is often hampered by the limited cross-sector cooperation which does not allow a strong policy support that is based on scientific evidence.

Following the implementation of the actions foreseen by the Commission's Communication on Joint Programming to tackle Europe's major societal challenges of 2008, the Competitiveness Council has launched altogether ten Joint Programming Initiatives so far, among which is the Joint Programming Initiative 'Urban Europe - Global Urban Challenges, Joint European Solutions' (JPI Urban Europe)⁴. The initiative enhances the knowledge and capacities to support urban transition towards sustainability in Europe and beyond. In doing so, it develops innovative solutions and reduces the fragmentation of urban-related research and innovation funding as well as builds critical mass and visibility. Several Council Conclusions on Joint Programming⁵ invite the Commission to support JPIs via Coordination and Support Actions.

The development of the JPI Urban Europe is driven by a strong group of countries but as to the overall country participation, in particular from the Widening countries, the initiative is seeking to ensure a more balanced participation. Although efforts are taken by the JPI Urban Europe to widen the participation, the results can only be expected in a longer-term as this challenge is of the structural nature.

The use of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) is seen as an essential element to strengthen the implementation of new urban solutions and concepts in Europe. While the JPI Urban Europe aims to create, validate and demonstrate knowledge and solutions, the ESI Funds could provide the frame for investments and implementation. The challenge is how to create synergies, complementarities and coherence as well as alignment between the activities of the JPI Urban Europe and other existing resources such as the ESI Funds, in particular, in the Widening countries.

The outreach and opening of the JPI Urban Europe to third country partners is increasingly raising interest among the latter. Building on this momentum, the challenge is to further enhance the opening of the JPI to international cooperation and thus contribute to creating a coherent European Research Area that is open to international cooperation in the field of sustainable urban development. The challenge is how to consolidate the alignment of national, EU and international research and innovation programmes, which is one of the key objectives of Joint Programming Initiatives. In that regard, there is also a need to support the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, in particular the Sustainable Development Goal on sustainable cities and urban settlements⁶, building on related international activities taking place at United Nations level.

⁴ Council Conclusions of 8 December 2011

⁵ Council Conclusions of 12 October 2010, of 26 November 2010 and of 8 December 2011

⁶ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-11-sustainable-cities-and-communities.html>

Scope:

Proposals should aim to implement a solid widening strategy of the JPI Urban Europe by achieving participation of new European partner countries in the initiative, in particular, from the Widening countries. Proposals should build on the coordination action ‘EXPAND – Enhancing co-creation in JPI Urban Europe through widening Member State and stakeholder participation’⁷ that is expected to establish a Stakeholder Involvement Platform for the widening of participation and capacity building in terms of countries, regions, stakeholders and urban actors. In that regard, proposals should ensure the sustainability of the Stakeholder Involvement Platform. Proposals should engage the Widening countries in the activities of the JPI Urban Europe with the support of existing complementary resources such as the ESI Funds. In doing so, the proposal should build on the pilot activities implemented⁸ and establish further test beds for new instruments and for scaling up innovative solutions. Proposals should further professionalise the JPI Urban Europe programme management and further diversify various instruments for creating scientific evidence, innovations and the impact. Proposals should support the strategic processes of the JPI Urban Europe beyond 2020 and also establish mechanisms for the implementation of the future internationalisation strategy of the JPI Urban Europe⁹ that is under preparation. In doing so, proposals should investigate activities to align with and support the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, in particular, the Sustainable Development Goal on sustainable cities and urban settlements.

All participants in proposals must be legal entities which finance or manage publicly funded national or regional programmes in the urban-related research and innovation domains or which are institutions mandated to represent the country/region in JPI Urban Europe activities.

The Commission considers that proposals with duration of three years and requesting a contribution from the EU in the range of EUR 1.5 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other durations and other amounts.

Expected impact:

- Increased scale and scientific quality of urban-related research and innovation activities as well as the overall coherence, complementarity and efficiency of the use of European research and innovation resources in this area including from the Widening countries (medium to long term impact);
- Further professionalised programme management and more diversified instruments supporting implementation of the JPI Urban Europe Strategic Research and Innovation

⁷ Grant Agreement number 726744 awarded under Horizon 2020 - part 15. Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

⁸ This task has to develop further the outcomes of the two pilot actions initiated in connection with the ERA-NET Cofund ‘Smart Cities and Communities’ and the Coordination action ‘EXPAND – Enhancing co-creation in JPI Urban Europe through widening Member State and stakeholder participation’

⁹ Provided that the internationalisation strategy of the JPI Urban Europe will be adopted by 2019

Agenda corresponding to the conditions of the Widening countries as well as the JPI Urban Europe strategy development beyond 2020 (short to medium term impact);

- Increased synergies, complementarities and alignment between the strategies, activities and related resources of the JPI Urban Europe and other existing resources such as the ESI Funds, in particular in the Widening countries (medium term impact);
- More efficient valorisation and take-up of research findings both in terms of policy and innovation, including test beds for piloting new urban solutions (short to medium term impact);
- Improved exchange of know-how on urban R&I solutions across the EU, including the Widening countries, and at global level (short to medium term impact);
- Strengthened role of the JPI Urban Europe for underpinning knowledge and scientific evidence for supporting the implementation of related EU policies, also in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda (medium to long term impact);
- Enhanced positioning of the JPI Urban Europe as a privileged and attractive partner for global cooperation in the urban-related research and innovation (medium to long term impact).

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.

WIDESPREAD-03-2020: ERA Chairs

Since this is a 2020 call the information provided below is very tentative for information purposes only and subject to change.

Specific Challenge: With adequate institutional support outstanding researchers can have a decisive and positive impact on the culture and performance of research institutions. Yet issues such as the availability of research funding, institutional rigidities and access to resources can hamper their mobility to promising institutions, particularly in low R&I performing countries. ERA Chairs actions will address the specific challenge of creating the appropriate conditions for high quality researchers and research managers to move and engage with institutions willing to achieve excellence in the scientific domain of choice and modify their research and innovation landscape.

Scope: The ERA Chairs actions will support universities or research organisations with the objective of attracting and maintaining high quality human resources under the direction of an outstanding researcher and research manager (the "ERA Chair holder") and in parallel implement structural changes to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.

The scientific field can be any domain of research and innovation addressed under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union¹⁰, however it needs to be closely connected with the activities of the ERA Chair holder and fully capitalise on his/her presence and expertise.

Research organisations interested in establishing an ERA Chair shall submit a proposal based on a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, aimed at structural change in the institution and ensuring that the conditions are in place to foster excellent research. Proposals should include arrangements for compliance with ERA priorities¹¹ including the European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers¹², a description of the necessary investments in research projects, facilities and infrastructures and how those will be achieved as, for example, through the use of Cohesion Policy funds, and/ or a better use of the installed research capacity (in particular of EU co-funded research infrastructures & facilities). Proposals should outline how the proposed activities will positively induce a change in current practices.

ERA Chair holders should be excellent researchers and research managers in the given field of research, with a proven record of effective leadership. They should establish their own research team fully integrated in the coordinator's institution to significantly improve its research performance in the scientific domain of choice and to be more successful in obtaining competitive funding. The ERA Chair holder should have a position within the organisation/university, professor or similar, that will allow her/him to make appropriate resource allocation decisions, supervise team members and freely apply for research funding. A letter of the head of the institution clearly describing the intended remuneration package of the ERA Chair holder and the criteria on which the level of remuneration¹³ has been established, as well as his/her roles, level of responsibility and obligations should be included within the proposal. This will allow for the determination of the commitment of the institution and feasibility of the ERA Chair tasks.

The position of the ERA Chair holder must be open to all EU and non-EU nationals but shall match the profile of an "Established Researcher (R3)" or "Leading Researcher (R4)" as set out in the European Framework for Research Careers¹⁴. Moreover, given the objectives of the action, internal mobility within the institution hosting the grant is excluded except in exceptional and duly justified cases. The appointment of an ERA Chair holder will be undertaken by the host institution at the beginning of the action and must follow an open, transparent and merit-based recruitment process that will be monitored by the European Commission.

¹⁰ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=en>

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/pdf/era-communication/era-communication_en.pdf

¹² <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter>

¹³ see page 40 of the Annotated Model Grant Agreement (AGA) at

http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amga/h2020-amga_en.pdf

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf

It is expected that the Chair holder commits him/herself for the full duration of the grant. The ERA Chair holder is to be appointed in a full-time position (permanent or non-permanent) in accordance with the national legislation of the institution hosting the grant.

The grant that can have a duration of five years maximum will cover the appointment of the ERA Chair holder and a number of team members (e.g. their salaries, recruitment costs¹⁵, administrative costs, travel and subsistence costs).

The grant will also provide a contribution towards measures aimed at facilitating structural changes in the institution (e.g. costs for trainings, meetings, publications and managing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). While the action does not focus on equipment and consumables, these could be accepted if they constitute only a minor part of the total Horizon 2020 funding requested and are deemed necessary to fulfil the action's specific scope and objective). For grants awarded under this topic and type of action, the following cost categories will be ineligible costs:

- Infrastructure costs;

Hence, the grant is not a measure to fund research per se and proposals shall outline how funds to cover for such costs will be found and allocated.

The respective option of Article 6.5.C of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of EUR 2.5 million, would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting lower amounts.

Expected Impact:

- Institutional changes within the ERA Chair host institution allowing for its full participation in the European Research Area.
- Increased attractiveness of the institution for internationally excellent and mobile researchers (including a policy of compliance to the European Research Area priorities like (an open recruitment policy, gender balance, peer review and innovative doctoral training).
- Increased research excellence of the institution in the specific fields covered by the ERA Chair holders illustrated quantitatively and qualitatively through indicators such as expected future publications in peer reviewed journals, collaboration agreements with businesses, intellectual property, new innovative products or services.
- Improved capability to compete successfully for internationally competitive research funding.

¹⁵ That can be considered under the category of "other direct costs".

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.

WIDESPREAD-04-2020: Twinning

Since this is a 2020 call the information provided below is very tentative for information purposes only and subject to change.

Specific Challenge: The specific challenge is to enhance networking activities between the research institutions of the Widening countries and internationally-leading counterparts at EU level. Driven by the quest for excellence, research intensive institutions tend to collaborate increasingly in closed groups, producing a crowding-out effect for a large number of promising institutions. This is the challenge that a specific Twinning action will try to address.

Scope: Twinning aims at significantly strengthening a defined field of research in a university or research organisation from a Widening country by linking it with at least two internationally-leading research institutions in other Member States or Associated Countries. Twinning will:

- Enhance the scientific and technological capacity of the linked institutions with a principal focus on the university or research organisation from the Widening Country;
- Help raise the research profile of the institution from the Widening country as well as the research profile of its staff.

Successful Twinning proposals will have to clearly 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. This scientific strategy should include arrangements for joint research project(s) in the scientific area of choice and describe how Twinning will take this research to a new stage, by enlarging its scope and/or the research partnership. If relevant, any links with sustainable development objectives are to be outlined.

Such a strategy should include a comprehensive set of activities to be supported. These should include at least a number of the following: short term staff exchanges; expert visits and short-term on-site or virtual training; workshops; conference attendance; organisation of joint summer school type activities; dissemination and outreach activities.

A dedicated focus towards promoting the involvement of early stage researchers (as per the MSCA definition¹⁶) in the coordinating institution from the Widening country is expected.

¹⁶ Early stage researchers shall, at the time of recruitment by the host organisation, be in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience) of their research careers and have not been awarded a doctoral degree. Full-time equivalent research experience is measured from the date when the researcher obtained the degree entitling him or her to embark on a

This should take the form of a dedicated work package in the proposal describing activities dedicated to early stage researchers from the coordinating institution that could include training, mentoring and networking measures within the Twinning exercise.

In general, costs relating to administration, networking, coordination, training, management, travel costs are acceptable under a Twinning project.

Therefore, for grants awarded under this topic and type of action the following cost categories will be ineligible costs:

- infrastructure costs;
- equipment;
- research costs (including consumables).

The respective option of Article 6.5.C of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied.

The duration of a Twinning project can be up to 3 years.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of EUR 0.8 million, would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting lower amounts.

Expected Impact:

- Increased research excellence of the coordinating institution in the particular field of research as a result of the twinning exercise.
- Enhancing the reputation, attractiveness and networking channels of the coordinating institution.
- Improved capability to compete successfully for national, EU and internationally competitive research funding.
- Illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the expected potential impact of the twinning exercise within the coordinating institution (and possibly at regional/national level) based on indicators like expected future publications in peer reviewed journals, collaboration agreements with businesses, intellectual property, new innovative products or services.
- It should be explained how the leading scientific institutions in the partnership will contribute in terms of provision of access to new research avenues, creativity and the development of new approaches, as well as acting as a source for increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

doctorate, (either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited) even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged. Part-time research experience will be counted pro-rata.

- The benefits for the internationally leading scientific institutions and the way they would materialise through the partnership should be substantiated.

Type of Action: Coordination and support action

The conditions related to this topic are provided at the end of this call and in the General Annexes.

Opening date(s), deadline(s), indicative budget(s):¹⁷

Topics (Type of Action)	Budgets (EUR million)			Deadlines
	2018	2019	2020	
	Opening: 15 May 2018			
WIDESPREAD-01-2018-2019 (CSA)	103	111		15 Nov 2018
	Opening: 15 May 2018			
WIDESPREAD-02-2018 (CSA)	1.5			15 Nov 2018
	Opening: 14 May 2019			
WIDESPREAD-03-20 (CSA)			60	14 Nov 2019
	Opening: 14 May 2019			
WIDESPREAD-04-2020 (CSA)			59	14 Nov 2019
Overall indicative budget	104.5	111	119	

Indicative timetable for evaluation and grant agreement signature:

¹⁷ The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening.

All deadlines are at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.

The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.

For single stage procedure:

- Information on the outcome of the evaluation: Maximum 5 months from the final date for submission; and
- Indicative date for the signing of grant agreements: Maximum 8 months from the final date for submission.

Eligibility and admissibility conditions: The conditions are described in General Annexes B and C of the work programme. The following exceptions apply:

<p>WIDESPREAD-01-2018-2019</p>	<p>1. This is a restricted call for proposals open <u>only</u> to:</p> <p>a. Applicants successfully funded under the topic WIDESPREAD-04-2017: Teaming Phase 1.</p> <p>b. Applicants who have concluded a Framework Partnership Agreement under the topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014 but have not concluded a Specific Grant Agreement under the topic WIDESPREAD-01-2016-2017: Teaming Phase 2.</p> <p>For both points a. and b. above, in order not to put in doubt the result of the initial evaluation (Teaming Phase 1), the internationally leading ("advanced") institution(s) partners in the proposal must remain the same as in Phase 1.</p> <p>A change of the partners from the widening country for Phase 2 is only allowed in clear-cut cases such as where there might be a conflict of interest or a new legal entity for the Centre of Excellence is created. A detailed explanation for such a change has to be elaborated as part of the proposal for Phase 2.</p> <p>2. The requested EU contribution shall not exceed a maximum of EUR 15 million for a period between 5 to 7 years.</p>
<p>WIDESPREAD-02-2018</p>	<p>1. All participants in a proposal must be legal entities which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finance or manage publicly funded national or regional programmes in the urban-related research and innovation domains or - Institutions mandated to represent the country/region in JPI Urban Europe activities. <p>2. The requested EU contribution shall not exceed a maximum of EUR 1.5 million.</p>
<p>WIDESPREAD-03-2020</p>	<p>1. The applicant organisation where the ERA Chair holder will be hosted should be established in a Member State or Associated</p>

	<p>Country that is ranked below 70% of the EU27 average of the composite indicator on Research Excellence¹⁸.</p> <p>The selected corrective threshold of 70% of the EU average has been chosen in line with the particular policy requirements of the measure, to ensure the greatest possible impact through targeting only the lowest performing Member States, and thereby maximising the real value of these actions.</p> <p>Based on the above threshold, applicant organisations from the following Member States and Associated Countries (subject to valid association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020) will be eligible to submit proposals (the "low R&I performing" or "Widening" countries):</p> <p><u>Member States:</u> Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.</p> <p><u>Associated Countries:</u> Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.</p> <p>2. ERA Chairs proposals must be submitted by a single applicant as they are a mono-beneficiary action. The applicant organisation must satisfy the condition set out in point 1 above.</p> <p>3. The requested EU contribution shall not exceed a maximum of EUR 2.5 million for a period of up to 5 years.</p>
WIDESPREAD-04-2020	<p>1. The applicant organisation (coordinator) where a defined field of research aims to be strengthened as a result of the Twinning action should be established in a Member State or Associated Country that is ranked below 70% of the EU27 average of the composite indicator on Research Excellence¹⁹.</p> <p>The selected corrective threshold of 70% of the EU average has been chosen in line with the particular policy requirements of the measure, to ensure the greatest possible impact through targeting</p>

¹⁸ The detailed scores of the composite indicator can be found in p. 5 (Excellence in S&T 2010) of the "Research and Innovation Performance in EU Member States and Associated Countries 2013" at http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/innovation_union_progress_at_country_level_2013.pdf

¹⁹ The detailed scores of the composite indicator can be found in p. 5 (Excellence in S&T 2010) of the "Research and Innovation Performance in EU Member States and Associated Countries 2013" at http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/innovation_union_progress_at_country_level_2013.pdf

	<p>only the lowest performing Member States, and thereby maximising the real value of these actions.</p> <p>Based on the above threshold, applicant organisations from the following Member States and Associated Countries (subject to valid association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020) will be eligible to submit proposals as coordinators (the "low R&I performing" or "Widening" countries):</p> <p><u>Member States</u>: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.</p> <p><u>Associated Countries</u>: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.</p> <p>2. Twinning proposals must involve a minimum of <u>three</u> participants:</p> <p>a. The applicant organisation must satisfy the condition set out in point 1 above, and must be the coordinator of the proposal.</p> <p>b. At least two internationally-leading research intensive counterparts that must be coming from a Member State or Associated Country other than that of the coordinating applicant.</p> <p>3. The requested EU contribution shall not exceed a maximum of EUR 0.8 million for a period of up to 3 years.</p>
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Evaluation criteria, scoring and threshold: The criteria, scoring and threshold are described in General Annex H of the work programme. The following exceptions apply:

<p>WIDESPREAD-01-2018-2019</p>	<p>Hearings are expected to take place for all proposals that will pass all individual evaluation thresholds.</p> <p>A two-step evaluation process will be organised. The first step will consist of the remote individual evaluation and consensus group/panel review, followed by a second step with hearings.</p> <p>After the consensus group/panel review, those proposals that passed all individual criteria thresholds will be invited to hearings, whereas those proposals that did not pass one or more of the individual thresholds will receive a rejection letter.</p> <p>Hearings will take place in Brussels. As an outcome of this exercise, comments and scores obtained at the consensus group might be modified.</p>
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Evaluation Procedure: The procedure for determining a priority order for proposals with the same score is given in General Annex H of the work programme. The following exceptions apply:

WIDESPREAD-01-2018-2019	<p>The first criterion for determining a priority order for proposals which have been awarded the same score within a ranked list will be the following:</p> <p>Proposals with coordinators established in "low R&I performing" or "Widening" countries²⁰ not otherwise covered by more highly-ranked proposals, will be considered to have the highest priority.</p> <p>This approach will be applied successively for every group of <i>ex aequo</i> proposals requiring prioritisation, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order.</p> <p>Any further prioritisation will be conducted according to the rules set in Annex H.</p>
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The full evaluation procedure is described in the relevant [guide](#) published on the Participant Portal.

Consortium agreement: Members of the consortium are required to conclude a consortium agreement for topics WIDESPREAD-01-2018-2019, WIDESPREAD-02-2018, WIDESPREAD-04-2020, in principle prior to the signature of the grant agreement. There is no requirement to conclude a consortium agreement for topic WIDESPREAD-03-2020, since this is a mono-beneficiary action aimed at supporting individual institutions.

²⁰ **Member States:** Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
Associated Countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

Other actions

1. External Expertise

This action will support the use of appointed independent experts for the monitoring and review of running projects where appropriate.

Type of Action: Expert Contracts

Indicative timetable: 2018, 2019 and 2020

Indicative budget: EUR 0.07 million from the 2018 budget, EUR 0.20 million from the 2019 budget and EUR 0.20 million from the 2020 budget

2. COST²¹

Scene-setter: COST was established as an intergovernmental framework in 1971 for promoting cooperation among researchers across Europe. Within COST, research carried out at national level is funded by the COST Member States, while the EU funds central administration, coordination and networking.

COST has established its own dedicated implementation structure (COST Association, an AISBL under Belgian law) under the direct governance of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) in order to handle directly EU support to COST activities. It is therefore through this entity that support to COST under Horizon 2020 is channelled. Such governance is expected to lead to increased efficiency in management and lower administrative expenditure levels.

Support to COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)

COST, as an integral part of the Innovation Union and the European Research Area shall contribute to the delivery of the Europe 2020 agenda and the Innovation Union goals through efficient implementation of the COST networking activities.

COST has a long experience in networking European researchers and a high leverage power. Furthermore, through its openness and inclusiveness policies, COST has a significant role in bringing new partners, notably outstanding younger researchers or researchers from less research-intensive countries, into contact with excellent researchers elsewhere in Europe.

During Horizon 2020, COST will receive EU funding from two Work Programme parts, but shall manage it in an integrated manner to consistently contribute to both:

A) Scientific and Technological Cooperation:

²¹ This activity directly aimed at supporting the promotion of coherent and effective cooperation with third countries is excluded from the delegation to REA and will be implemented by the Commission services.

COST will reinforce its networking activities carried out by COST actions. This part will be funded under “Societal Challenge 6 – Inclusive Societies”.

B) Widening Activities:

COST will contribute to fostering inclusive research and innovation policy by bringing together "pockets of excellence", outstanding researchers who are not yet well integrated in European and global research, also enhancing capacity building. Moreover, COST will include a set of measures aimed at providing structural support to ERA, widening the European research base and promote S&T cooperation with other countries, beyond COST current membership²². This second component will be funded under the “Widening Participation” heading.

It is expected that both components are implemented in an integrated manner whereby half of the overall COST budget available under Horizon 2020 will be spent at the benefit of participants from Widening countries.

Legal Entity: COST Association AISBL, Belgium

Type of Action: Specific Grant Agreement

7- year Framework Partnership Agreement number: 633054 – COST H2020 with identified beneficiary and specific grants awarded to identified beneficiary for Coordination and Support Action under the Framework Partnership Agreement.

The standard evaluation criteria, thresholds, weighting for award criteria and the maximum rate of co-financing for this type of action are provided in parts D and H of the General Annexes.

Indicative timetable: 2018, 2019 and 2020

Indicative budget: EUR 20.28 million from the 2018 budget, EUR 20.28 million from the 2019 budget and EUR 20.28 million from the 2020 budget

3. WIRE IX Presidency Conference²³

A two-day conference (WIRE IX) will be organised during the EU Austrian Presidency (Presidency Conference) in Innsbruck (South Tyrol). It will focus on connecting basic research with lively start-up, in the context of a vibrant ecosystem.

²² Current COST members are: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Israel is a Cooperating State, non-voting member of COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO).

²³ This activity directly aimed at supporting the development and implementation of evidence base for R&I policies and supporting various groups of stakeholders is excluded from the delegation to REA and will be implemented by the Commission services.

Expected impact: The conference will showcase concrete experiences of well- functioning R&I ecosystem and will inspire new practices to stimulate R&I collaboration and co-creation. The participants will have an opportunity to have in-depth knowledge and discussions on the innovative approaches adopted by the quadruple helix stakeholders on the main themes of the conference.

Legal entities: Tiroler Zukunftsstiftung - Standortagentur Tirol, Ingenieur-Etzel-Straße 17, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria

Type of Action: Grant to identified beneficiary - Coordination and support actions

The standard evaluation criteria, thresholds, weighting for award criteria and the maximum rate of co-financing for this type of action are provided in General Annexes D and H of the work programme.

Indicative timetable: Q3 2018

Indicative budget: EUR 0.25 million from the 2018 budget

4. WIRE X Conference ²⁴

(JUNE/JULY 2019??)

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5. WIRE XI Conference ²⁵

(JUNE/JULY 2020??)

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²⁴ This activity directly aimed at supporting the development and implementation of evidence base for R&I policies and supporting various groups of stakeholders is excluded from the delegation to REA and will be implemented by the Commission services.

²⁵ This activity directly aimed at supporting the development and implementation of evidence base for R&I policies and supporting various groups of stakeholders is excluded from the delegation to REA and will be implemented by the Commission services.