

HORIZON 2020
WORK PROGRAMME 2016 – 2017

15. Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

This draft text is submitted to the Horizon 2020 Programme Committee as the basis for an exchange of views. The text is still subject to further elaboration and final legal checking.

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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. These trends are further exacerbated by the continuing severe financial crisis, and the subsequent adverse effects on public research and innovation budgets.

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 R&D 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 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 Excellence¹ (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:

¹ 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

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, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, 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.

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 and maintain 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.

A *Policy Support Facility* will inform better the formulation and optimisation of research and innovation policies in low R&I performing Member States and Associated Countries aiming to make them more competitive at European level by offering expert advice to public authorities.

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.

Call for WIDESPREAD

H2020-WIDESPREAD-2016-17

Proposals are invited against the following topics:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/innovation_union_progress_at_country_level_2013.pdf

WIDESPREAD-1-2016: Teaming Phase 2²

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. Moreover, by putting national budgets under constraint, the ongoing financial crisis is threatening to widen gaps. 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 address this challenge by supporting 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 on this purpose.

Scope:

Successful applicants under topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014 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. This Business Plan is expected to be submitted in form of a proposal for Teaming Phase 2, as explained in detail further below.

This proposal (Business Plan) should demonstrate the potential of the future Centre to develop new (or connect effectively with existing) regional cluster formation and the prospects of the hosting country/region to provide an innovation friendly environment. The proposal has to include commitments (the form of commitment needs to follow the Commission template that will be provided in due time) 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. A properly functioning service-oriented administration that is able to provide the human resources needed to absorb the research and innovation potential of the new/upgraded Centre should be demonstrated.

The proposal (Business Plan) should:

- 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

² only for those applicants successful in the topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014

- 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
- Elaborate on the steps that will be taken towards eventual long term self-sustainability

Procedure for Teaming Phase 2³: In the context of the Framework Partnership Agreements awarded under topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014, a Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) will be awarded on the basis of a call for proposals open to all the above mentioned grant holder consortia for which this type of activity is already included in the FPA action plan (in accordance with the procedure established in art. 2.2 of the FPA).

Applicants to the Teaming Phase 2 call for proposals are invited to submit as a proposal, the Business Plan produced as main deliverable of the grant awarded under topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014.

Following the evaluation of the submitted Teaming Phase 2 proposals, the Commission will enter into a Specific Grant Agreement with the highest ranked proposals to provide substantial support for the start-up and implementation phase of the future Centre. This will cover mainly administrative and operational costs as well as salaries of the future Centre of Excellence. However, equipment and consumables could be funded as long as they are sufficiently justified. They should only constitute a minor part of the total Horizon 2020 funding requested.

It is to be noted, that Horizon 2020 under the Teaming action will not support research infrastructure costs or any other kind of infrastructure 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.

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:

³ Attention: This call for proposals is open only to those applicants that have been successful in the 2014 Teaming Phase 1 call (Topic acronym: WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming), and who have concluded a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the Commission in the context of that Call.

- Increase their scientific capabilities and enable them to engage in a strategic growth path pointing to long-term opportunities for economic development. Potential links to innovative clusters would be an asset.
- 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 the research and innovation culture (as shown through indicators such as research intensity, innovation performance, values and attitudes towards research and innovation) of those countries.

The potential impact of the new/upgraded Centre of Excellence in terms of sustained excellence should be reinforced through projected measurable key performance and output related indicators.

Benefits will also accrue to the institutions from the more intensive research and innovation performers, in terms of access to new research avenues, creativity and the development of new approaches, as well as a source for increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

Type of action: Coordination and Support Action funded by a specific grant awarded under an existing Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA).

Indicative Budget: [EUR 82 million from the 2016 budget and EUR 53 million from the 2017 budget]

The conditions related to this topic are provided in the general conditions for this call and in the General Annexes.

Opening Date: [08/03/2016]

Deadline: [08/09/2016]

WIDESPREAD 2-2016: Support to JPI Urban Europe⁴

Specific challenge: The importance of urban areas in contributing to economic growth and innovation as well as in tackling social and environmental challenges is recognised by European policy agendas and beyond. Strong evidence exists that the largest urban areas are developing into 'global cities as knowledge hubs' that function in the worldwide networks of economic activities and innovation, communication as well as mobility and attract human capital. However, city regions in the Widening countries are facing specific challenges. For instance, the processes of severe regional polarisation and population shrinkage are hindering the development of many city regions into knowledge hubs in these countries. At the same

⁴ This activity is excluded from the delegation to REA and will be implemented by the Commission services.

time, there are huge possibilities of improvement for the Widening countries based on active collaboration with innovative urban regions of higher performing countries. Also other global megatrends such as demographic and climate change will have more severe negative impacts on urban regions in the Widening countries, especially in Eastern Europe, whereas city regions in Western and Northern parts of the Union will be less affected. In order to respond to these challenges, actors from the Widening countries should be actively involved in relevant R&I networks and activities having a strong policy-informing ambition.

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)⁵. This initiative enhances the knowledge and capacities in order 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 Programming⁶ invite the Commission to support JPIs via Coordination and Support Actions.

Scope: Proposals should contribute to achieving an increased participation of countries and actors from the Widening countries in the JPI Urban Europe. The proposals should also build on the coordination action 'BOOST – Cooperation in Urban Science, Technology and Policy' in support to the JPI Urban Europe that is expected to result in a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) and in a related Implementation Plan⁷. Proposals should focus on actions enabling the JPI members to carry out activities foreseen in the Implementation Plan, for instance, by favouring the alignment of these activities to the SRIA. Moreover, proposals should support alignment of national research as well as enable evidence-based policy-making and effective cross-policy actions, and investigate novel forms of the SRIA implementation such as collaborations with other JPIs or research infrastructures, development of funding synergies with the European Structural and Investment Funds and so on. Finally, proposals should further strengthen the positioning of the JPI Urban Europe in the context of existing national and European activities by ensuring coherence with other relevant initiatives. Proposals should also enhance the international dimension of the JPI.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU in the range of EUR 1.25 million would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately.

⁵ Council Conclusions of 8 December 2011

⁶ Council Conclusions of 12 October 2010, of 26 November 2010 and of 8 December 2011

⁷ The Implementation Plan is expected to apply effective and efficient methods of collaboration such as those proposed by the 'Voluntary guidelines on Framework Conditions', adopted by the High Level Group on Joint Programming (GPC).

Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact:

- Increased country participation of the JPI Urban Europe from the Widening countries by relationship building with actors, and by ensuring that the SRIA properly addresses the specific priorities and needs of these countries.
- Improved overall uptake of the SRIA in national programmes and activities through alignment.
- Contribution to the development of specific instruments for the SRIA implementation such as urban observatories or data warehouses, and involving actors from the Widening countries in these developments.
- Improved professionalization of the programme management including knowledge exchange, capitalization of generated knowledge as well as implementation of new innovative solutions and concepts.
- Enhanced positioning of the JPI Urban Europe in terms of research approach, research areas and instruments in the context of existing national and European activities and beyond including the outreach to cities, city networks and other urban actors.
- Increased evidence-base for policy-making aimed at key EU priorities.

Additional eligibility criteria: (Complementing the general eligibility criteria applicable to CSA-CA)

All participants in the proposal must be independent legal entities which:

- Finance or manage publicly funded national or regional programmes related to the addressed domains or
- Institutions mandated to represent the country/region in JPI Urban Europe activities.

Type of action: Coordination and Support Action

Indicative Timetable: 2016

Indicative budget: [EUR 1 250 000 from the 2016 budget]

Opening Date: [02/11/2015]

Deadline: [03/02/2016]

WIDESPREAD 3-2017: ERA Chairs

Specific challenge: 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 the mobility of such leaders to promising institutions, particularly in low R&I performing countries. ERA Chairs actions will address the specific challenge of creating the appropriate conditions and opportunities for high quality researchers and research managers to move and engage with willing institutions to improve the excellence of their research and thereby 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 implementing the structural changes necessary to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.

The scientific field can be any domain of research and innovation addressed under the Treaty, 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 SWOT analysis, aimed at facilitating 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 priorities⁸ including the European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers⁹, better use of the installed research capacity (in particular of EU co-funded research infrastructures & facilities) and/or a description of the necessary investments in facilities and infrastructures. For the latter, interactions with national or regional authorities and other stakeholders to coordinate actions and mobilise support, including, where relevant, from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) or Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) funds, are a must. If relevant, any links with sustainable development objectives are to be outlined.

ERA Chair holders should be outstanding researchers and research managers in the given field of research, with a proven record of effective leadership. They should establish their own team and help the research organisation to significantly improve its research performance and to be more successful in obtaining competitive funding. 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 in order to raise the level of research excellence of the team and the institution. Proposals will need to describe clearly the roles, level of responsibility and

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/era-communication_en.pdf

⁹ European Commission Recommendation to the Member States C(2005)576 final

obligations of the ERA Chair holder allowing for the determination of the feasibility of his/her tasks.

The position of the ERA Chair holder must be open to all EU and non-EU nationals. 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 and merit-based recruitment process that will be monitored by the European Commission.

It is expected that the Chair holder will commit him/herself for the full duration of the grant. In principle, 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 but part-time arrangements might be agreed by the parts, if deemed beneficial for the action.

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 costs¹⁰, 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 publication and patenting and equipment in duly justified cases). Hence, the grant is not a measure to fund research per se and will not cover research costs like consumables].

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:

- Increased attractiveness of the institution, host region and country for internationally excellent and mobile researchers.
- Increased research excellence of the institution in the specific fields covered by the ERA Chair holders.
- Improved capability to compete successfully for internationally competitive research funding.
- Institutional changes within the ERA Chair host institution to implement the European Research Area priorities, (including an open recruitment policy, gender balance, peer review, and doctoral training);

Type of action: Coordination and support actions

Indicative Budget: [EUR 38.30 million from the 2017 budget]

¹⁰ That can be considered under the category of "other direct costs".

The conditions related to this topic are provided in the general conditions for this call and in the General Annexes.

Opening Date: [07/03/2017]

Deadline: [07/09/2017]

Specific Eligibility Conditions:

1. The applicant organisation where the ERA Chair holder will be hosted 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 Excellence¹¹.

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.

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):

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

Associated Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

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.

3. The requested EU contribution shall not exceed a maximum of EUR 2.5 million for a period of up to 5 years.

WIDESPREAD 4-2017: Teaming Phase 1

Specific challenge: Despite a recent tendency for the research and innovation performances 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

¹¹ 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

and regions strategically in a path of innovative growth, building on newly developed capabilities. Moreover, by putting national budgets under constraint, the ongoing financial crisis is threatening to widen gaps. 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 address this challenge by supporting 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 on this purpose.

Scope:

Teaming, will involve in principle, two (2) parties:

(1) The main applicant organisation (the coordinator) established in a "Widening" country (see section on specific eligibility criteria for more details) that must be either a national/regional authority or a research funding agency or a university or a research organisation. In case the coordinator organisation is not a public authority, it will need to provide the 'proof' of a serious intent of the public authority to financially commit (the Commission will provide a relevant template letter) to ensure the long-term nature and accountability of Teaming projects.

(2) A university or research organisation with an international reputation in research and innovation excellence.

Partner organisations will have to explain clearly their vision for the establishment of a new Centre of Excellence (or the upgrading of an existing one) that would be hosted in the "Widening" country. This will include details on the long-term science and innovation strategy of the future Centre, in particular, the detailed provisions for the good management of the project between the partners. Furthermore, proposers should include a clear analysis of how this strategy would fit broadly with the relevant Smart Specialisation Strategy of the Widening country, where relevant. In the case of an upgrade of an existing centre of excellence, additional information concerning organisation profile, activities and strategy of the centre should be provided.

Information for Teaming Phase 1:

Under Phase 1, successful applicants will receive a grant that will last for 12 months, to produce an extensive, detailed and robust Business Plan for the setting-up / upgrading of a Centre of Excellence.

Proposers will be asked to demonstrate within their (single) proposal two distinct, yet complementary aspects:

1. a long term vision, including a long term science and innovation strategy based on a SWOT analysis, for the new Centre of Excellence (or the upgrading of an existing one) that would be hosted in the Widening country (the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) content).
2. a 12 month action aimed at producing a detailed and robust business plan for the setting-up/upgrading of the Centre of Excellence in line with the long term vision (a Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) funding a Coordination and Support Action (CSA) content).

The Teaming proposal will need to demonstrate that the project is based on a true joint venture between the relevant partners from both parties. This long term joint venture cooperation is expected to continue also beyond the duration of the overall Teaming project, with the partners fully committed to continue supporting the new Centre in view of achieving sustainability in the long run and hopefully financial autonomy (also by successfully competing for European and international funding programmes).

Following the evaluation of proposals, Teaming actions will be selected for funding through signing two separate agreements with successful applicants:

- a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA), based on the long-term cooperation between the Commission and the selected consortium on the overall vision/strategy for the development of the future centre, which will form the Action Plan for the FPA, and
- a Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) funding a Coordination and Support Action (CSA) which, within the context of the long term vision, will cover the 12 month implementation of activities leading to the production of a Business Plan.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of EUR 0.40 million, would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting lower amounts.

Preliminary Information for Teaming Phase 2 (under WP 2018/19):

Once the 12 month SGA-CSA under Teaming Phase 1 is concluded, the FPA will be maintained only for those applicants selected for the concrete implementation of the Business Plan, i.e. for the establishment of the new/upgraded centre (Teaming, Phase 2).

In the context of the Framework Partnership Agreements awarded under topic WIDESPREAD-4-2017: Teaming Phase 1, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2016-17, a Specific Grant Agreement (SGA) will be awarded on the basis of a call for proposals open to all the consortia for which this type of activity is already included in the FPA action plan (in accordance with the procedure established in art. 2.2 of the FPA).

The submitted proposals will undergo an independent evaluation, and those selected for funding will be awarded a specific grant SGA-CSA (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 salaries of the future Centre of Excellence.

However, equipment and consumables could be funded as long as they are sufficiently justified. They should only constitute a minor part of the total Horizon 2020 funding requested.

It is to be noted, that Horizon 2020 under the Teaming action will not support research infrastructure costs or any other kind of infrastructure 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.

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

Further explanations for Teaming Phase 2 will be given in the future Work Programme 2018-19.

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 their scientific capabilities and enable them to engage in a strategic growth path pointing to long-term opportunities for economic development. Potential links to innovative clusters would be an asset.
- 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.

The potential impact of the new/upgraded Centre of Excellence in terms of sustained excellence should be reinforced through projected measurable key performance and output related indicators.

Benefits will also accrue to the institutions from the more intensive research and innovation performers, in terms of access to new research avenues, increased creativity and development of new approaches, as well as a source for increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

Type of Action: Framework Partnership Agreement and Coordination and Support Action funded by a specific grant awarded under the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA-SGA-CSA).

Indicative Budget: [EUR 12 million from the 2017 budget]

The conditions related to this topic are provided in the general conditions for this call and in the General Annexes.

Opening Date: [08/03/2016]

Deadline: [08/09/2016]

Specific Eligibility Conditions:

1. The applicant organisation where the Centre of Excellence is/will be established 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 Excellence¹².

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.

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):

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

Associated Countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

2. Teaming proposals must involve a minimum of two participants:

a. The applicant organisation (that must be either a national/regional authority or a research funding agency or a university or a research organisation) must satisfy the condition set out in point 1 above, and must be the coordinator of the proposal.

b. At least one teaming/partnering university or research organisation which must be coming from a Member State or Associated Country other than that of the coordinating applicant.

3. The requested EU contribution shall not exceed a maximum of EUR 0.40 million for a period of 12 months.

Specific Evaluation Criteria:

The proposal must identify broad alignment with the relevant Smart Specialisation Strategies of the Member State or region from which the applicant is coming (as defined in the relevant

¹² 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

Regulations of the European Parliament and the Council regarding the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

Other actions

1. External Expertise

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

Type of action: Expert contracts

Indicative budget: [EUR 0.50 million from the 2016 budget and EUR 0.90 million from the 2017 budget]

2. COST

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 and coordination.

Starting from 2003, under FP6 & FP7, support to COST was provided through a grant agreement between the Commission and an external legal entity designated by COST as its implementing agent, whose identity was communicated to the Commission by the General Secretariat of the Council.

COST has now 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 expected to be 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. In fact, a recent review concluded that the COST Action portfolio corresponds to nationally funded research inputs estimated in excess of EUR 2 billion. 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 different lines, but shall manage it in an integrated manner to consistently contribute to both:

A) Scientific and Technological Cooperation:

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 membership¹³. 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 grants awarded to identified beneficiary for Coordination and Support Action under the 7-year Framework Partnership Agreement

Indicative timetable: 2016 & 2017

Indicative budget: [EUR 18 280 000 from the 2016 budget & EUR 18 280 000 from the 2017 budget]

3. Policy Support Facility

The Policy Support Facility (PSF) is a new instrument under Horizon 2020 to support Member States in the design, implementation and evaluation of national R&I strategies,

¹³ 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, 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).

programmes and institutions. It offers, on a voluntary basis, high level expertise and tailor-made advice to national public authorities. A framework contract was established in 2015 to provide overall support to the management of the Policy Support Facility (PSF).

This provision serves to implement the framework service contract by providing the following services: support to Peer Reviews of national R&I strategies, programmes and institutions; specific support to countries (pre-peer reviews, post peer reviews, ad-hoc requests for support needed in the design, implementation or evaluation of specific R&I reforms); support to in-depth mutual learning between a group of countries; and dissemination activities.

Type of action: Public Procurement – Specific Contracts implementing the Framework Service Contract (with Ref. No: 2015/RTD/A4/OP/PP-00123-2014) on the services of the Policy Support Facility

Indicative Timetable: 2017

Indicative budget: [EUR 2 000 000 from the 2017 budget]

4. Support to EU Presidency events: Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE)

A. 2016 WIRE VII under the Dutch Presidency

A two-day conference (WIRE VII) will be organised during the EU Dutch Presidency (Presidency Conference). This conference will aim at taking stock of the previous WIRE VI conference organised during the Latvian Presidency in 2015. It will focus on the enhancing the digital agenda in EU regions and on the lessons learnt in the implementation of the smart specialisation strategies in the context of the new programming period (2014-2020). In particular, it will concentrate on sharing practices and inspiring innovative approaches among the R&I 'quadruple helix' stakeholders on these topics on strengthening networking between stakeholders for building future R&I trans-European projects funded by FP7 and H2020.

Expected impact: The conference will take stock of the results achieved since the conference WIRE IV organised in 2015 by the Latvian Presidency and will provide a platform for stakeholders to have an in depth discussion on the innovative approaches adopted by regions and member states on the main themes of the conference.

Legal entity: Brainport Development N.V., Emmasingel 11, P.O. BOX 2181, NL-5600 CD Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Type of action: Grant to identified Beneficiary-Coordination and support action

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: Second Quarter 2016

Indicative Budget: [EUR 0.25 million from the 2016 budget]

[B. 2017 WIRE VIII during the Maltese Presidency (TBC)

A two-day conference (WIRE VIII) will be organised during the EU Maltese Presidency. This conference will aim at giving an appropriate follow up to the WIRE VII conference organised during the Dutch Presidency in 2016.

Expected impact: This conference will firstly take stock of the results achieved since the conference WIRE VII organised in 2016 by the Dutch Presidency. Secondly, it will provide a platform for stakeholders to develop mutual learning on innovative practices and approaches.

Legal entity: XXXXX (Name and Address)

Type of action: Grant to identified Beneficiary-Coordination and support action

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: Second Quarter 2017

Indicative Budget: [EUR 0.25 million from the 2017 budget]

5. Studies

The following studies will be performed in 2016 with the aim of collecting useful evidence for the purpose of contributing to the mid-term evaluation of Horizon 2020, which will be finalised by the second half of 2017.

1. Study on ERA Chairs and Twinning

The study will be aimed at analysing the framework conditions enabling successful implementation of the ERA Chairs and Twinning actions. It will focus on progress made towards the actions' achievements, on implementations modalities and EU added value. The topic of structured mobility of researchers for bringing in excellence in the host institutions will receive special attention.

2. Study on Teaming

The study will be aimed at analysing the framework conditions enabling successful implementation of the Teaming actions. It will focus on progress made towards the actions'

achievements, on implementations modalities and EU added value and will analyse the influence of specific geographical and institutional contexts on impact in institution building.

Type of action: Public Procurement

Indicative timetable: 2016

Indicative budget: [EUR 0.03 million from the 2016 budget]

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