

**HORIZON 2020**  
**WORK PROGRAMME 2014 – 2015**

*15. Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation*

**Important Notice on the First Horizon 2020 Work Programme**

**This Work Programme covers 2014 and 2015. Due to the launching phase of Horizon 2020, parts of the Work Programme that relate to 2015 (topics, dates, budget) are provided at this stage on an indicative basis only. Such Work Programme parts will be decided during 2014.**

*(European Commission Decision C (2014)2690 of 29 April 2014)*

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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 regions 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 region 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 regions to improve their research and innovation systems and policies.

Moreover, 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 those who could commit more towards the EU research and innovation effort. This will greatly enhance competitiveness.

*Teaming* will invest in Europe's research and innovation potential through supporting the creation of new (or upgrading of existing) Centres of Excellence 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.

*ERA Chairs* will bring outstanding researchers to universities and other research organisations that have high potential for research excellence. On their side, institutions should mobilise support from different funding sources, including from the European Structural and Investment Funds, to invest in facilities and infrastructures in the context of Smart Specialisation Strategies and commit to institutional change and a broader support to innovation.

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

Finally, actions to facilitate the trans-national co-operation between *NCPs* will be deployed, helping less experienced entities in low performing Member States or regions, bridge the knowledge gap and rapidly acquire know-how accumulated in other countries thus enabling better access to funding opportunities in the EU Framework Programmes and beyond.

A novelty in Horizon 2020 is the Open Research Data Pilot which aims to improve and maximise access to and re-use of research data generated by projects. While certain Work Programme parts and areas have been explicitly identified as participating in the Pilot on Open Research Data, individual actions funded under the other Horizon 2020 parts and areas can choose to participate in the Pilot on a voluntary basis. The use of a Data Management Plan is required for projects participating in the Open Research Data Pilot. Further guidance on the Open Research Data Pilot is made available on the Participant Portal.

## **Call for WIDESPREAD**

***H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014***

Proposals are invited against the following topics:

### **WIDESPREAD 1-2014: Teaming**

Specific challenge: Despite its strengths, the European Research and Innovation landscape presents a lot of structural disparities, with research and innovation excellence concentrated in a few geographical zones. These disparities are due to, among other reasons, the insufficient critical mass of science and centres having sufficient competence to engage countries and regions strategically in a path of innovative growth, building on newly developed capabilities. This could help countries and regions that are lagging behind in terms of research and innovation performance reclaim their competitive position in the global value chains. Teaming will address this challenge by creating or upgrading such centres of excellence, building on partnerships between leading scientific institutions and low performing partners that display the willingness to engage together on this purpose.

Scope: Teaming, will involve in principle, two (2) parties: an institution of research and innovation excellence (public or private) or a consortium of such institutions and the participant organisation from a low performing Member State (for example a national or regional authority, or a research agency at national or regional level; the presence of a local partner research institution is encouraged as it could provide additional relevance to the teaming process). Both parties will be required to sign the grant agreement. The coordinator of the project should be the participant organisation from the low performing Member State. Teaming actions will be selected for funding through the following process:

Stage 1: 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 low performing Member State or region involved. 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 with the relevant Smart Specialisation Strategy of the participating low performing Member State or region. In the case of an upgrade of an existing centre of excellence (or a consortium of centres of excellence established in the same region), additional information concerning organisation profile, activities and strategy of the centre should be provided. Successful applicants will receive a

grant to produce an extensive, detailed and robust Business Plan for the setting-up / upgrading of a Centre of Excellence.

The 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. It has to include commitments from the interested national or regional authorities to commit financial resources (e.g. resources coming from the European Structural and Investment Funds) as appropriate, for implementing the future Centre, in particular regarding investment in infrastructure and equipment. A properly functioning service-oriented administration as well as an education and training system that is able to provide the human resources needed to absorb the innovation potential of the new research centre should be demonstrated. The duration of a typical first stage of a Teaming project will be 12 months.

Stage 2: All funded proposals of the first stage will automatically enter into the second stage of the competition that will involve an in-depth evaluation (by an international expert panel) of all submitted Business Plans. These will be evaluated in terms of content (scientific excellence), impact on innovation and quality of the proposed implementation plan.

Following this evaluation and depending on available budget, the Commission will enter into a Grant agreement with the highest ranked proposals to provide further substantial support (administrative costs, salaries etc.) for the start-up and implementation phase of the future Centre. It is to be noted however, that Horizon 2020 will not support infrastructure or large equipment costs associated with the new or upgraded centre (as reflected above, such costs are expected to be supported by other types of funding, including where relevant by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)).<sup>1</sup> The duration of a typical second stage of a Teaming project will be 5-7 years.

The long-term cooperation between the Commission and the selected partner organisations that have been successful in Stage 1 will be formalised with a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA). This agreement shall specify the common objectives, the nature of the specific actions planned and the general rights and obligations of each party. It is noted however, that the FPA will continue in Stage 2 only with those organisations that have received the highest ranking (through an evaluation by an international high-level expert panel) for their submitted Business Plans from Stage 1.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of between EUR 0.2 and 0.5 million for Stage 1 and between EUR 15 and 20 million for Stage 2 would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact: Actions will lead to the creation of new (or significant upgrades of existing) Centres of Excellence in Member States and regions currently identified as low performers in

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<sup>1</sup> Following an initial (minimum) three years' operating period, the Commission may consider to award "labels of excellence" to those newly established Centres that have met strict international standards through an independent international evaluation process (to be further organised by the Commission). There would however, be no additional EU funding involved. It should also be noted that this operation is not part of this Work Programme and Call.

terms of research and innovation, increasing on the one hand their scientific capabilities and on the other, enabling them to engage in a strategic growth path in terms of economic development. It is also expected that improved scientific capabilities will allow them to improve their chances to seek competitive funding in international fora (including the EU Framework Programmes). Over the medium to long term there will be a measurable and significant improvement in the research and innovation culture (as shown through indicators such as research intensity, innovation performance, enhanced strategy, values and attitudes towards research and innovation) within Member States currently with low R&I performance. These will be fostered through constructive and sustainable partnerships achieved between research and innovation-intensive institutions of excellence and the partnering organisation in the low performing Member State or region. Benefits will also accrue to the institutions from the more intensive research and innovation performers, in terms of issues such as 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: Framework Partnership Agreement and Coordination and Support Action funded by a specific grant awarded under the Framework Partnership Agreement.

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

#### **WIDESPREAD 2-2014: 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 performing Member States and regions. ERA Chairs actions will address the specific challenge to create 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 other eligible research organisations<sup>2</sup> to attract and maintain high quality human resources and implement the structural changes necessary to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis. An ERA Chair holder should be an outstanding researcher and research manager in the given field of research, with a proven record of effective leadership. They should establish their own team and help the research organisation to significantly improve its research performance and to be more successful in obtaining competitive funding.

Research organisations interested in establishing an ERA Chair shall submit a proposal aimed at facilitating structural change in the institution and ensuring that the conditions are in place to foster excellent research. This should include arrangements for compliance with ERA priorities<sup>3</sup> including the European Charter for Researchers & Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers<sup>4</sup>, 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

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<sup>2</sup> “research organisation” means a non-profit making organisation which carries out scientific or technical research as its main objective

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research\\_policies/era-communication\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/era-communication_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> European Commission Recommendation to the Member States C(2005)576 final

regional authorities and other stakeholders to coordinate actions and mobilise support, including, where relevant, from European Structural and Investment Funds, are a must.

The ERA Chairs may be in any domains of research and innovation addressed under the Treaty, but are expected to be in line with relevant regional and national strategies for smart specialisation. The Chair should have a full-time position within the organisation/university, professor or similar, that will allow her/him to freely apply for research funding in order to raise the level of research excellence of the team and the institution. The appointment of an ERA Chair holder must follow an open and merit-based recruitment process, and will be subject to monitoring by the European Commission. The appointment will be undertaken by the host institution at the beginning of the action. The position of the ERA Chair holder must be open to all EU and non-EU nationals.

The grant will cover the appointment of the ERA Chair holder and a number of team members and will also provide a contribution towards measures aimed at facilitating structural changes in the institution, for a maximum period of five years. Hence, the grant is not a measure to fund research per se.

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, 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 host institution to implement the European Research Area priorities, (including an open recruitment policy, gender balance, peer review, and doctoral training);
- Contributing to the objectives of regional or national smart specialisation strategies, including increased interactions with economic and social actions, and complementing support provided under the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Type of action: Coordination and support actions

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

**WIDESPREAD 3-2014: Transnational network of national contact points (NCP)**

Specific challenge: Facilitate trans-national co-operation between NCPs within the ‘Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation’ part with a view to identifying and sharing good practices and raising the general standard of support to programme applicants, taking into

account the diversity of actors that make up the constituency of this ‘Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation’ part.

Scope: Support will be given to a consortium of formally nominated NCPs in the area of the ‘Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation’ part. The activities will be tailored according to the nature of the area, and the priorities of the NCPs concerned. Various mechanisms may be included, such as benchmarking, joint workshops, enhanced cross-border brokerage events, specific training linked to this ‘Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation’ part as well as to gender dimension of Research and Innovation and twinning schemes. Special attention will be given to enhance the competence of NCPs, including helping less experienced NCPs rapidly acquire the know-how accumulated in other countries.

The focus throughout should be on issues specific to the ‘Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation’ part and should not duplicate actions foreseen in the NCP network for quality standards and horizontal issues under ‘Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation’.

Only NCPs from EU Member States and Associated Countries, and which have been officially appointed by the relevant national authorities are eligible to participate in and receive funding for this action.

The consortium should have a good representation of experienced and less experienced NCPs.

Submission of a single proposal is encouraged. NCPs from EU Member States or Associated Countries choosing not to participate as a member of the consortium should be identified and the reason explained in the proposal. These NCPs are nevertheless invited and encouraged to participate in the project activities (e.g. workshops), and the costs incurred by the consortium for such participation (e.g. travel costs paid by the consortium) may be included in the estimated budget and be eligible for funding by the Commission.

The Commission will only fund one proposal under this topic.

Expected impact:

- An improved and professionalised NCP service across Europe, thereby helping simplify access to Horizon 2020 calls, lowering the entry barriers for newcomers, and raising the average quality of proposals submitted.
- A more consistent level of NCP support services across Europe.
- Increased application levels as well as improved quality of proposals particularly from newcomers

Type of Action: Coordination and support actions

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

**CONDITIONS FOR THIS CALL: WIDESPREAD**

Publication date<sup>5</sup>: 11/12/2013

Deadline(s)<sup>6</sup>:

WIDESPREAD 1-2014	17/09/2014 at 17.00.00 Brussels time
WIDESPREAD 2-2014	15/10/2014 at 17.00.00 Brussels time
WIDESPREAD 3-2014	26/03/2014 at 17.00.00 Brussels time

Overall indicative budget: EUR 47.45 million from the 2014 budget<sup>7</sup>

	2014 EUR million	2015 EUR million	
WIDESPREAD 1-2014	11.85		Single stage
WIDESPREAD 2-2014	33.60		Single stage
WIDESPREAD 3-2014	2.00		Single stage

Eligibility and admissibility conditions: The conditions are described in parts B and C of the General Annexes to the work programme, with the following exceptions:

WIDESPREAD-1-2014	<p>The specific policy requirements, scope and perspectives of Teaming actions necessitate specific eligibility conditions for this particular action, relating to the broader concept of spreading excellence and widening participation in the EU, with a targeted focus on Member States that have low research and innovation performance.</p> <p>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 objectives of this action it is necessary to target those who are low performing in terms of research excellence.</p> <p><u>Composite indicator of Research Excellence</u><sup>8</sup>: Measures the research excellence in Europe, meaning the effects of European</p>
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<sup>5</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication.

<sup>6</sup> The Director-General responsible may delay this deadline by up to two months.

<sup>7</sup> The budget amounts in 2014 are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2014 after the adoption of the draft budget 2014 by the budgetary authority or if the budget is not adopted as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

	<p>and national policies on the modernization of research institutions, the vitality of the research environment and the quality of research outputs in both basic and applied research. The indicator is composed of four variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The share of highly cited publications in all publications where at least one of the authors has an affiliation in a given country;</li><li>- Number of top scientific universities and public research organizations in a country divided by million population;</li><li>- Patent applications per million population;</li><li>- Total value of ERC grants received divided by public R&amp;D performed by the higher education and government sectors;</li></ul> <p><u>Specific eligibility conditions:</u></p> <p>1. The applicant organisation where the Centre of Excellence is/will be established should be established in a Member State<sup>9</sup> that is ranked below 70% of the EU27 average of the composite indicator on Research Excellence.</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<sup>10</sup> will be eligible to submit proposals:</p> <p>Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.</p> <p>2. Teaming proposals must involve a minimum of <u>two</u> participants:</p> <p>a. The applicant organisation<sup>11</sup> must satisfy the condition set out</p>
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<sup>8</sup> 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](http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/innovation_union_progress_at_country_level_2013.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> or Associated Country, subject to the future association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020.

<sup>10</sup> The following Associated Countries (subject to the future association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020) will be eligible to submit proposals: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Liechtenstein, Moldavia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

	<p>in point 1 above, and must be the coordinator of the proposal.</p> <p>b. At least one (or a consortium of) teaming/partnering organisation(s)<sup>12</sup> which should be coming from a Member State<sup>13</sup> other than that of the applicant.</p>
<p>WIDESPREAD-2-2014</p>	<p>The specific policy requirements, scope and perspectives of ERA Chairs actions necessitate specific eligibility conditions for this particular action, relating to the broader concept of spreading excellence and widening participation in the EU, with a targeted focus on Member States that have low research and innovation performance.</p> <p>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 objectives of this action it is necessary to target those who are low performing in terms of research excellence.</p> <p><u>Composite indicator of Research Excellence</u><sup>14</sup>: Measures the research excellence in Europe, meaning the effects of European and national policies on the modernization of research institutions, the vitality of the research environment and the quality of research outputs in both basic and applied research. The indicator is composed of four variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The share of highly cited publications in all publications where at least one of the authors has an affiliation in a given country;</li> <li>- Number of top scientific universities and public research organizations in a country divided by million population;</li> <li>- Patent applications per million population;</li> <li>- Total value of ERC grants received divided by public R&amp;D performed by the higher education and government sectors;</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> for example a national or regional authority or a research agency at national or regional level

<sup>12</sup> for example an excellent public or private research intensive university or research organisation of international repute

<sup>13</sup> or Associated Country, subject to the future association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020.

<sup>14</sup>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](http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/innovation_union_progress_at_country_level_2013.pdf)

	<p><u>Specific eligibility conditions:</u></p> <p>1. The applicant organisation (university or research organisation<sup>15</sup>) where the ERA Chair holder will be hosted should be established in a Member State<sup>16</sup> that is ranked below 70% of the EU27 average of the composite indicator on Research Excellence.</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<sup>17</sup> will be eligible to submit proposals:</p> <p>Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.</p> <p>2. ERA Chairs proposals must be submitted by a single participant. The applicant must satisfy the condition set out in Criterion 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 60 months and 90% of the total estimated budget for each proposal.</p>
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Evaluation criteria, scoring and threshold: The criteria, scoring and threshold are described in part H of the General Annexes to the work programme, with the following exceptions:.

<p>WIDESPREAD-1-2014</p>	<p>1. The proposal must clearly identify alignment and complementarity with the relevant Smart Specialisation Strategies of the Member State or region from which the applicant is coming (as defined in the relevant Regulations of the European Parliament and the Council regarding the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)).</p> <p>2. Proposals will have to include a presentation of the long-term science and innovation strategy of the future Centre</p>
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<sup>15</sup> “research organisation” means a non-profit making organisation which carries out scientific or technical research as its main objective

<sup>16</sup> or Associated Country, subject to the future association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020.

<sup>17</sup> The following Associated Countries (subject to the future association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020) will be eligible to submit proposals: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Liechtenstein, Moldavia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

	<p>based on a SWOT analysis.</p> <p>3. Proposals must respond to and provide sufficient details in line with the Scope and Expected Impact of the Teaming action as described in the specific topic description.</p>
WIDESPREAD-2-2014	<p>1. Proposals are encouraged to identify alignment and complementarity with the national or regional Smart Specialisation Strategies of the Member State or region where the applicant organisation is established.</p> <p>2. Proposals will have to include a presentation of the long-term science and innovation strategy of the institution based on a SWOT analysis.</p> <p>3. Proposals will need to describe clearly the roles, level of responsibility and obligations of the ERA Chair holder allowing for the determination of the feasibility of his/her tasks.</p> <p>4. Proposals must respond to and provide sufficient details in line with the Scope and Expected Impact of the ERA Chairs action as described in the specific topic description.</p>

Evaluation procedure: The procedure for setting a priority order for proposals with the same score is given in part H of the General Annexes.

The full evaluation procedure is described in the relevant guide associated with this call.

- Indicative timetable for evaluation and grant agreement:

	Information on the outcome of the evaluation ( <i>single stage</i> )	Indicative date for the signing of grant agreements
All topics	Maximum 5 months from the final date of submission	Maximum 3 months from the date of informing applicants.

Consortium agreement: In line with the Rules for Participation and the Model Grant Agreement, proposals funded under topic WIDESPREAD 1-2014 and WIDESPREAD 3-2014 are required to conclude a consortium agreement, prior to the grant agreement. For WIDESPREAD 2-2014 the action is aimed at supporting individual institutions. To ensure that selected institutions will fully benefit from the scheme, this is a mono-beneficiary action and ERA Chairs proposals must be submitted by a single participant. Therefore, participants are NOT required to conclude a consortium agreement.

## **Call for Twinning**

**H2020-TWINN-2015**

Specific challenge: The specific challenge is to address networking gaps and deficiencies between the research institutions of the low performing Member States and regions 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 particular knowledge institution (a research active university or a public or private non-profit research organisation) by creating a link between this institution and at least two internationally-leading research institutions in other Member States. Twinning will:

- Enhance the S&T capacity of the linked institutions;
- Help raise staff's research profile as well as the one of the institutions involved.

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. They are also encouraged to explain how the Twinning activity will contribute to the overall Smart Specialisation Strategy of the specific location of the initiating institution.

Such a strategy should include a comprehensive set of measures 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. Twinning activities will provide no support to infrastructure and equipment and no support for hiring new permanent research staff.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of EUR 1 million, would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting other amounts.

Expected impact: There will be a measurable and significant improvement in the overall scientific and innovation capacity of the initiating institution in a particular field of research through linking with research intensive counterpart institutions in other Member States and thereby expect positive impacts on the overall research and innovation potential of the Member State or the region the initiating institution is located in. Such improvement could be measured through an increase of peer-reviewed publications, increased impact factors in terms of citations etc.

Impact indicators should reflect an increase in relative terms based on the situation before the project compared to the projected situation immediately after the project is completed, as well as within the foreseeable future after completion. These indicators are important for determining the potential regional and national impact, as well as long-term sustainability and viability of the beneficiary organisations.

Type of action: Coordination and support actions

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

**CONDITIONS FOR THIS CALL: TWINNING**

Publication date<sup>18</sup>: 02/07/2014

Deadline(s)<sup>19 20</sup>: [02/12/2014 at 17.00.00 Brussels time]

Overall indicative budget: EUR 64.120 million from the 2015 budget<sup>21</sup>

Eligibility and admissibility conditions: The conditions are described in parts B and C of the General Annexes to the work programme, with the following exceptions:

H2020-TWINN-2015	<p>The specific policy requirements, scope and perspectives of Twinning actions necessitate specific eligibility conditions for this particular action, relating to the broader concept of spreading excellence and widening participation in the EU, with a targeted focus on Member States that have low research and innovation performance.</p> <p>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 objectives of this action it is necessary to target those who are low performing in terms of research excellence.</p> <p><u>Composite indicator of Research Excellence</u><sup>22</sup>: Measures the research excellence in Europe, meaning the effects of European and national policies on the modernization of research institutions, the vitality of the research environment and the quality of research outputs in both basic and applied research. The indicator is composed of four variables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The share of highly cited publications in all publications where at least one of the authors has an affiliation in a given country;</li><li>- Number of top scientific universities and public research organizations in a country divided by million population;</li></ul>
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<sup>18</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication.

<sup>19</sup> The Director-General responsible may delay this deadline by up to two months.

<sup>20</sup> The deadlines provided in brackets are indicative and subject to a separate financing decision for 2015.

<sup>21</sup> The budget amounts for 2015 are indicative and will be subject to a separate financing decision to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2015.

<sup>22</sup> 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](http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2012/innovation_union_progress_at_country_level_2013.pdf)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Patent applications per million population;</li><li>- Total value of ERC grants received divided by public R&amp;D performed by the higher education and government sectors;</li></ul> <p><u>Specific eligibility conditions:</u></p> <p>1. The applicant organisation should be established in a Member State<sup>23</sup> that is ranked below 70% of the EU27 average of the composite indicator on Research Excellence.</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<sup>24</sup> will be eligible to submit proposals:</p> <p>Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.</p> <p>2. Twinning proposals must involve a minimum of <u>three</u> participants:</p> <p>a. The applicant organisation<sup>25</sup> 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<sup>26</sup> established in at least two different Member States<sup>27</sup> other than that of the applicant organisation.</p>
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<sup>23</sup> or Associated Country, subject to the future association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020.

<sup>24</sup>The following Associated Countries (subject to the future association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020) will be eligible to submit proposals: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Liechtenstein, Moldavia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

<sup>25</sup> for example a research active university or a public or private non-profit research organisation

<sup>26</sup> for example a public or private research intensive university or research organisation of international repute

<sup>27</sup> or Associated Countries, subject to the future association agreements of third countries with Horizon 2020.

Evaluation criteria, scoring and threshold: The criteria, scoring and threshold are described in part H of the General Annexes to the work programme, with the following exceptions:.

<p>H2020-TWINN-2015</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proposals are encouraged to identify alignment and complementarity with the national or regional Smart Specialisation Strategies of the Member State or region from which the applicant organisation is coming (as defined in the relevant Regulations of the European Parliament and the Council regarding the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)).</li> <li>2. 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.</li> <li>3. Proposals must respond to and provide sufficient details in line with the Scope and Expected Impact of the Twinning action as described in the specific topic description.</li> <li>4. Proposals will be expected to illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the extent of the expected potential impact within the initiating institution and subsequently the potential impact at regional and national level based on the following indicators:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of potential impact of a project proposal at regional / national level defined in terms of expected publications in peer reviewed journals, successful participation in new national or EU level research and innovation programmes, collaboration agreements with businesses, intellectual property, new innovative products or services).</li> <li>• Extent of synergy expected through cooperation with research intensive organisations due to increased research and innovation capacity.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
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Evaluation procedure: The procedure for setting a priority order for proposals with the same score is given in part H of the General Annexes.

The full evaluation procedure is described in the relevant guide associated with this call.

- Indicative timetable for evaluation and grant agreement:

	<p>Information on the outcome of the evaluation (<i>single stage</i>)</p>	<p>Indicative date for the signing of grant agreements</p>
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H2020-TWINN-2015	Maximum 5 months from the final date for submission	Maximum 3 months from the date of informing applicants
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Consortium agreement:

In line with the Rules for Participation and the Model Grant Agreement a consortium agreement is required, prior to the grant agreement, for each Twinning action between the knowledge institution and the two internationally-leading research intensive counterparts.

**Other actions<sup>28 29</sup>**

**1. COST<sup>30</sup>**

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 decided to establish 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 future support to COST under Horizon 2020 is expected to be channelled. Such new governance should 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

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<sup>28</sup> The budget amounts in 2014 are subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2014 after the adoption of the draft budget 2014 by the budgetary authority or if the budget is not adopted as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

<sup>29</sup> The budget amounts for 2015 are indicative and will be subject to a separate financing decision to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2015.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

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. This part will be funded under “Societal Challenges 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 membership<sup>31</sup>. This second component will be funded under the “Widening Participation” heading.

It is expected that half of the overall COST budget available under Horizon 2020 will be allocated to Scientific and Technological Cooperation Activities and half to Widening Activities, although the budget split could be adjusted on a yearly basis depending on the actual needs.

The grant beneficiary must ensure that there will be no double funding of the same COST Activities during the overlapping period of time between FP7 and H2020 Grant Agreements.

Legal entity: COST Association AISBL, Belgium

Type of action for 2014: 7-years Framework Partnership Agreement with identified beneficiary and specific grant awarded to identified beneficiary for Coordination and Support Action under the Framework Partnership Agreement

Indicative timetable: Q2-3 of 2014

Indicative budget:

**“Widening Activities”: EUR 20 585 000 for 2014**

Type of action for 2015: specific grant awarded to identified beneficiary for Coordination and Support Action under the Framework Partnership Agreement

Indicative timetable: 2015

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<sup>31</sup> 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).

Indicative budget:

**“Widening Activities”: EUR 28 015 000 for 2015**

## **2. Policy Support Facility<sup>32</sup>**

This line of activities aims at supporting the development of R&I policies at EU, national and regional level, through the use of the dedicated Policy Support Facility (PSF) that will be set up under Challenge 6 – 6.2.1. There is a first focus on offering on a voluntary basis expert advice to national/regional authorities for developing national and regional R&I policies and strategies, and a second on supporting policy coordination and mutual learning among MS with a view to better exploit transnational synergies and coherence in R&I policies within the EU.

The PSF will provide a range of concrete services to national and regional policymakers in the field of research and innovation:

1. an Innovation policy database gathering and providing access to easily searchable information on 'R&I policy cases' in EU Member States, regions and selected third countries;
2. an interactive innovation policy helpdesk providing support to national/regional policymakers through the innovation database or by helping them to formulate a policy-support request corresponding to their needs;
3. the organisation of in-situ innovation missions to address policy support requests (i.e. corresponding to policy needs that could not be serviced through the innovation database) and to gather complementary information in view of providing policy options to the users;
4. Dissemination/outreach activities (e.g. newsletters, subject-specific or country-specific dissemination events, annual conference) to support policy mutual learning.

During Horizon 2020, the Policy Support Facility will receive EU funding for:

### **- A) Setting up of the Policy Support Facility**

Setting-up and operation of the Policy Support Facility (PSF), aimed at improving the design and implementation of innovation policies by providing access to relevant evidence-base, expertise and evaluation results through added-value systems and services. This action will implement steps 1, 2 and part of 4 (for regular dissemination activities) of the PSF.

Type of action: Coordination and support Actions – public procurement

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<sup>32</sup> 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.

Indicative Timetable: 2015

Indicative budget: **EUR 6 000 000 (under part 6.2.1 of Societal Challenge 6)**

**- B) Support to the Policy Support Facility**

A call for tender will be prepared and published in 2014 (signature beginning 2015) in view of the signature of a Framework Service Contract aiming to support in-situ ‘innovation missions’ and ad-hoc dissemination activities, in the context of the Policy Support Facility with a budget ceiling of 20 million.

Type of action: Coordination and support actions – call for tender in view of the signature of a framework service contract

Indicative Timetable: Fourth Quarter 2014/ First Quarter 2015 (one single framework contract will be signed, which will be used to finance multiple individual contracts from 2015 until 2020).

Indicative budget: **Budget ceiling of EUR 20 000 000 (to be implemented through both SC6 and Widening for 2014-20)**

**- C) Innovation missions**

Innovation missions will be organised and supported on request to review various aspects of national/regional R&I systems to provide expert advice to public authorities. Individual contracts will be signed using the PSF Framework Service Contract (see B) above).

This action will implement step 3 of the PSF (see above).

Type of action: Coordination and support actions – public procurement through a framework contract.

Indicative Timetable: 2015

Indicative budget: **EUR 1 000 000**

### **3. Support to an event organised by the EU Greek Presidency: Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE V) <sup>33</sup>**

A two-day conference (WIRE V) will be organised during the EU Greek Presidency (Presidency Conference). This conference will aim at giving an appropriate follow up to the WIRE IV conference organised during the Irish Presidency in 2013. It will focus on enhancing research and innovation investment as well as policy efficiency, in the context of the new programming period (2014-2020). In particular, it will concentrate on the new specific objective of Horizon 2020 on Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation and will pay attention to the newly proposed measures to help address the innovation divide through actions on Teaming, Twinning and ERA Chairs, bringing excellence and innovation to research institutions. Additionally, in that context, the links and synergies of research and innovation policy with Cohesion Policy and the specific tool of clusters will be examined, especially regarding the modalities stemming from the new legislation of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

Expected impact: This conference will take stock of the results achieved since the conference WIRE IV organised in 2013 by the Irish Presidency. This event will provide a platform for stakeholders to have an in depth discussion on the opportunities presented for research and innovation through the 2014-20 funding programmes of Horizon 2020 and ESIF and their possible synergies. A particular focus on the new programmes relating to Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation, will increase information and raise awareness regarding the specific measures, therefore increasing the funding opportunities for the Member States and regions from Horizon 2020.

Legal entity: National Documentation Centre/Hellenic Research Foundation - Avenue Vas. Constantinou 48, Athens, 11635, GREECE.

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 2014

Indicative Budget: **EUR 0.25 million from the 2014 budget**

### **4. External Expertise**

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

Type of action: Expert contracts

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<sup>33</sup> 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.

Indicative timetable: Fourth Quarter 2014 and First Quarter 2015

**Indicative budget: EUR 0.50 million from the 2014 budget and EUR 0.50 million from the 2015 budget**

### **5. Expert Groups** <sup>34</sup>

As specified in the Call for Teaming (H2020-WIDESPREAD 1-2014), Business Plans for the establishment of new Centres of Excellence to be submitted in the form of deliverables at Stage 1 of a Teaming Call, will amongst other factors be evaluated on the basis of their impact on innovation.

The role of this Expert Group will be to offer guidance on the factors to be considered to ensure that proposals to be selected for Stage 2 funding will maximise the innovation potential and value of the investments made.

Type of action: Experts group

Indicative timetable: 1 group to be launched in 2014

Indicative budget: **EUR 0.15 million from the 2014 budget**

### **Budget**

<b>Calls</b>	<b>2014<sup>35</sup> Budget EUR million<sup>36</sup></b>	<i>2015<sup>37</sup> Budget EUR million</i>
Call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014 WIDESPREAD 1- 2014:Teaming	11.85	–
Call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014 WIDESPREAD 2- 2014:ERA Chairs	33.60	–
Call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014 WIDESPREAD 3- 2014: Transnational Network of National Contact Points (NCP)	2.00	–

<sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> Subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2014 after the adoption of the budget for 2014 by the budgetary authority or if the budget is not adopted as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

<sup>36</sup> The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places.

<sup>37</sup> The budget amounts are indicative and will be subject to a separate financing decision to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2015.

**HORIZON 2020 – WORK PROGRAMME 2014-2015**

*Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation*

Call H2020-TWINN-2015 TWINN- 2015: Twinning	–	64.12
<b>Other Actions</b>	<b>2014<sup>38</sup> Budget EUR million<sup>39</sup></b>	<b>2015<sup>40</sup> Budget EUR million</b>
Experts (expert evaluators, experts groups, monitors)	0.65	0.50
Grant to identified beneficiary – COST	20.59	28.02
Grant to identified beneficiary –Greek EU Presidency Conference	0.25	–
Public Procurement through a framework contract- Policy Support Facility	–	1.00

<b>Horizontal activities (08.020403)</b>	<b>2014<sup>41</sup> Budget EUR million<sup>42</sup></b>	<b>2015<sup>43</sup> Budget EUR million</b>
Dissemination activities	0.08	0.08
Corporate communication	0.04	–
<b>Estimated total budget</b>	<b>69.06</b>	<b>93.72</b>

<sup>38</sup> Subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2014 after the adoption of the budget for 2014 by the budgetary authority or if the budget is not adopted as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

<sup>39</sup> The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places.

<sup>40</sup> The budget amounts are indicative and will be subject to a separate financing decision to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft budget for 2014 after the adoption of the budget for 2014 by the budgetary authority or if the budget is not adopted as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

<sup>42</sup> The budget figures given in this table are rounded to two decimal places.

<sup>43</sup> The budget amounts are indicative and will be subject to a separate financing decision to cover the amounts to be allocated for 2015.