



Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation in Horizon 2020

'Stairway to Excellence' launch event – Prague
03/10/2014

Ciaran DEARLE, Senior Policy Officer

Unit: Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

Directorate General Research & Innovation

A graphic for Horizon 2020 featuring a glowing blue background with a horizon line. A small globe of the Earth is positioned in the center, with the word "HORIZON 2020" written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the middle. The globe is partially obscured by the letter "O" in "HORIZON".

HORIZON 2020

Content:

1. Background

2. Specific eligibility criteria for Widening actions

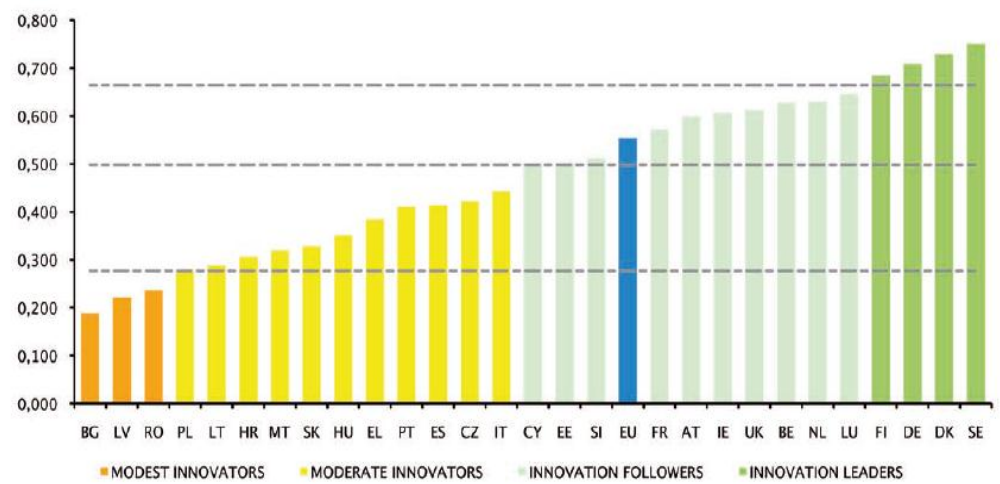
3. Synergies with Cohesion Policy

4. Presentation of Widening actions (Teaming, Twinning, ERA Chairs, PSF, COST)

Background

- Disparities in R&I excellence and performance >>> barrier to competitiveness, growth and jobs across Europe;
- Some countries are experiencing low participation in the EU Framework Programmes;
- Disparities due to structural issues, such as:
 - insufficient national RDI investment,
 - lack of synergies between certain countries national research systems and EU research landscape,
 - insufficient capacities,
 - reduced access to international networks.

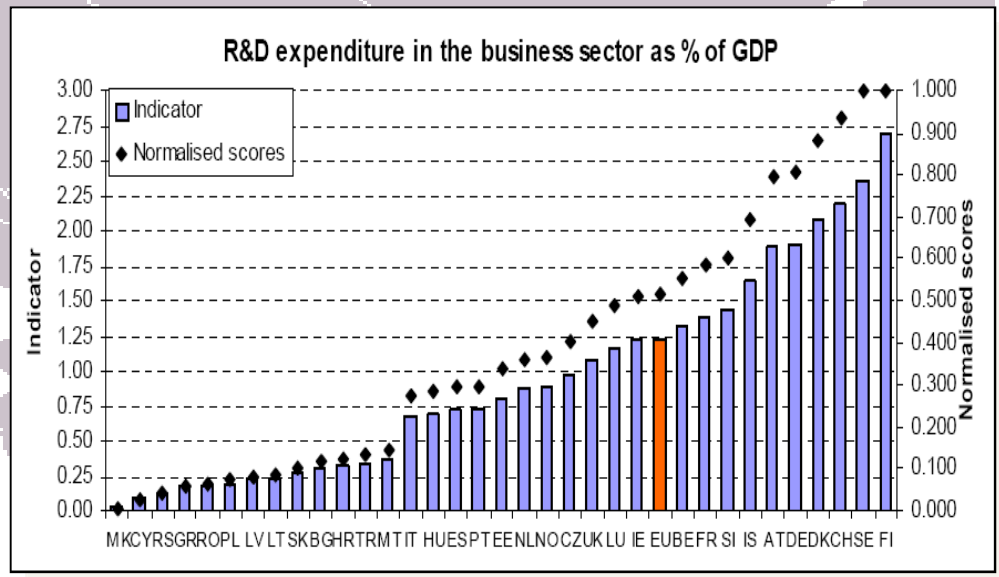
Figure 3: EU Member States' innovation performance



Innovation performance

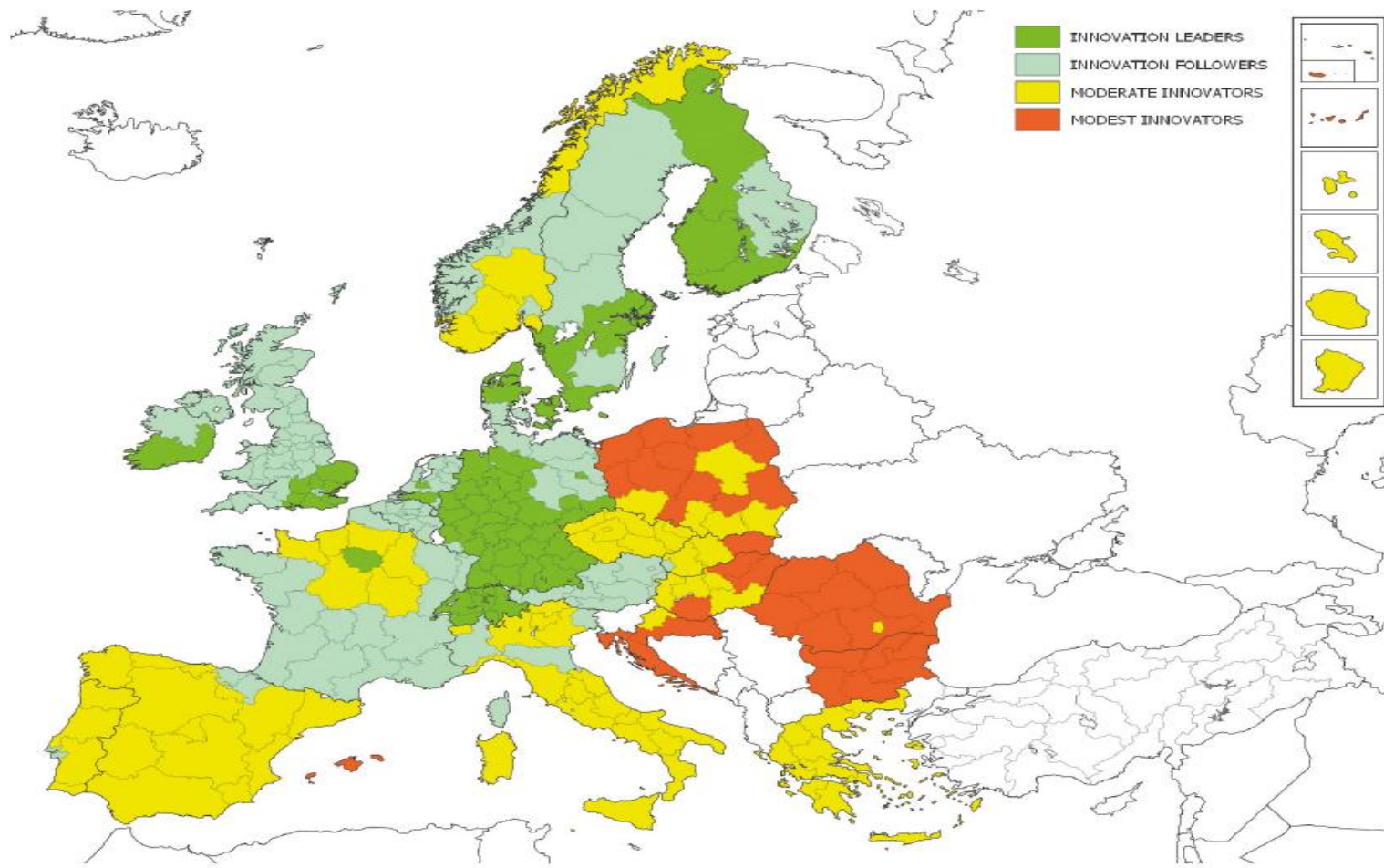
Note: Average performance is measured using a composite indicator building on data for 25 indicators going from a lowest possible performance of 0 to a maximum possible performance of 1. Average performance reflects performance in 2011/2012 due to a lag in data availability.

R&D expenditure in the business sector as % of GDP



The Innovation Divide

Figure 2: Regional performance groups RIS 2014



Map created with Region Map Generator

WIDENING PARTICIPATION in H2020

Following an intensive political debate on widening participation in the Framework Programme, a new set of measures was introduced in Horizon 2020 under the separate specific objective:

**"Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation"
(WIDESPREAD)**

Specific eligibility criteria for WIDESPREAD

- Particular political objectives of WIDESPREAD in H2020
- Necessitate a targeted approach to help those participants with low performance in R&I
- H2020 legal text >>"low performing RDI Member States and regions"

Eligibility Criterion: **The Composite Indicator of Research Excellence**

- Threshold: MS below 70% of the EU average

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

"low RDI performing" Associated Countries: The same eligibility criteria apply for Associated Countries to H2020

Synergies with Cohesion Policy

H2020 will help to reduce disparities and the R&I divide but:

Challenges need to be primarily addressed at national and regional level and through other instruments, such as Cohesion Policy funding.

Key to Synergies between R&I and Cohesion Policy in 2014-2020:

- ✓ *Thematic Concentration*
- ✓ *Smart Specialisation - ex-ante conditionality*

Thematic concentration in ESIF

- Significant funding from European Regional Development Fund must be **concentrated on 4 of 11** Thematic Objectives:
 - research, technological development and innovation;
 - access to, and use and quality of, ICT;
 - competitiveness of SMEs;
 - shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors.
- The **level of concentration** in the 4 Thematic Objectives:
 - 50% in less developed regions (GDP per capita <75% of EU average);
 - 60% in transitional regions (GDP per capita 75-90%);
 - 80% in more developed regions (GDP per capita >90%).

Smart Specialisation Strategies

Smart Specialisation Strategies are:

- A tool to set out national or regional priorities for investments in R&I for growth and jobs, which **take account of the current or emerging strengths**;
- A required element for planning future ESIF investments through role as '**ex ante conditionality**' for R&I funding.

Synergies under **WIDESPREAD**

Teaming:

- R&I Strategy of the future CoE should fit in with the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the MS/region
- National/ESI Funds commitment needed for rolling out the future CoE

Twinning

Alignment with the objectives of the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the MS/region is encouraged

ERA Chairs:

- Selected field of ERA Chair to be in line with the objectives of the Smart Specialisation Strategy of the MS/region
- Research capacity aspect to be funded from ESI Funds

Conclusion:

3- fold approach in the EU to close the R&I Divide, spread excellence and widen the participation:

- Action at national/regional level (including through Cohesion Policy)
- Action through WIDESPREAD in H2020
- Synergies between H2020 and Cohesion Policy

Overview of measures under **WIDESPREAD in H2020**

- Teaming for Excellence (CoEs)
- Twinning (institutional networking)
- ERA Chairs (bringing excellence to institutions)

- NCPs (information, communication, support)
- Policy Support Facility (support for R&I Policy design)
- COST (stimulating cross border science networks)

Total Budget for WIDESPREAD in H2020 ~ **€ 800 million**

Teaming for Excellence

Creation of new (or significant upgrade of existing) Centres of Excellence in low performing Member States and regions;

The Partners - 2 parties in each Teaming project:

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

(2) an institution of research and innovation excellence (public or private) or a consortium of such institutions (from all EU28 or AC);

Teaming for Excellence

Design of the action (in 2 stages): However please note that there will be only one Call (Stage 1 Call)

Stage 1: Funding for the development of a Business Plan for the new/upgraded Centre of Excellence facilitated by a teaming process with a leading counterpart in Europe

Stage 2: Subject to the quality of the Business Plan, and a commitment of the Member State (e.g. support via Cohesion Policy Funds), the Commission may provide further substantial financial support for the first steps of implementation of the Centre.

(Stage 1): Need to demonstrate the long-term science and innovation strategy of the future Centre based on a SWOT analysis

(Stage 2): All resulting Business Plans (Stage 1 deliverable) with robust financial commitments (from national / ESIF funds) will go through a competitive review process for selecting the Stage 2 grantees

Teaming for Excellence

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

Budget: € 11.85M

Call deadline: 17 September 2014

Project Size: €200.000 - €500.000 per proposal

Project Duration: 12 months

Deliverable: Business Plan of the CoE

In 2016: ("Stage 2" following a competitive review process of the submitted deliverables) > Start-up/Implementation of the CoE

Budget: ~ € 80-90 M

Project Size: €15-20M

Project Duration: ~ 5 years

Funding for: Substantial support for the start up & implementation phase of the CoE (salaries, other operational and administrative costs, small equipment)

Implementation: Specific Grant Agreement established under a Framework Partnership Agreement (Coordination and Support Action)

Total Budget for Teaming in H2020: ~ € 270 M

Teaming for Excellence

Key Success Factors:

- Well-chosen, carefully structured partnership & strong engagement from both parties
- Long term vision (at least 10-15 years) & long term financial commitment nationally (at least €40-50 M) from the outset
- Coordinator: Both strong in project management & strong in mobilising national/Cohesion funding
- New CoE: Eventual autonomy in decision-making is a must for sustained excellence
- Alignment with the national/regional Smart Specialisation Strategy: National/Regional authorities need to have finalised or be in the final stages of preparation of their S3 by autumn 2014
- Synergies with Cohesion Funding: Need to make appropriate conditional "space" in ESIF OPs to secure possible funding for Stage 2 (OPs are expected to be submitted to the EC in summer 2014)



Timeline for Teaming

- **11 December 2013:** WIDESPREAD-1 2014 Teaming Call published
- **26 February 2014 :** Infoday for Widening NCPs
- **25 March 2014 :** High Level Conference on Teaming (Warsaw,PL)
- **May 2014:** Call submission system opens (EC IT system)
- **April 2014:** Submission of PAs (ESIF) by Member States
- **Summer 2014:** Submission of OPs (ESIF) by Member States
- **Spring-Autumn 2014:** Finalisation of National/Regional S3s
- **17th September 2014:** Teaming Call deadline
- **February 2015:** Evaluation outcome to applicants
- **May 2015:** Signature of GA & start of Stage 1: Teaming projects



Twinning

What?

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

How?

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

Funding for:

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

Equipment & researchers' salaries will NOT be funded.



Twinning

The Partners

- **ONE** institution located in a Low Performing MS/region (**COORDINATOR**)
- A minimum of **TWO** additional partners from two different Member States or Associated Countries.

Call 2015 Details:

Budget: ~ € 65 M

Call publication date: 2 July 2014

Call deadline: Spring 2015

Project Size: €1 M per proposal

Project Duration: 3 years

Type of action: Coordination and Support Action

Total Budget for Twinning in H2020: ~ € 100 M

ERA Chairs – Objectives of the action

- Bring high quality researchers and managers to universities and other research organisations **with the potential for research excellence.**
- Institutions should implement **structural changes** to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.

ERA Chairs – Proposal design

- In **any scientific domain** of research and innovation but expected to be in line with regional/national **strategies for smart specialisation**.
- Shall comprise measures to foster compliance with **ERA priorities** (open recruitment, peer review, gender balance, innovative doctoral training).
- Include a plan to increase **Research Capacity**: measures for better use of the installed research capacity; description of any necessary investments in facilities and infrastructures and present a strategy to mobilise support for them (including possible support from Cohesion funds -ESIF).

ERA Chairs - Expected Impact

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

ERA Chairs – the ERA Chair holder

- The ERA Chair holder should be an **outstanding researcher and research manager** with a proven record of leadership
- The appointment of an ERA Chair holder must follow an **open and merit-based recruitment process**, and will be subject to monitoring by the European Commission
- ERA Chair holder shall be designated as a **full time position** or equivalent contractual arrangement
- The institution should ensure **autonomy** for the Chair and his/her team
- ERA Chairs can be of **any nationality**

ERA Chairs - Eligibility Criteria

- As for the other measures under Widening, applicant organisations shall be established in eligible Members States and Associated countries indicated in the Work Programme
- One **single applicant** (mono-beneficiary action)
- EU contribution not to exceed a **maximum of EUR 2,5 million** for up **to 5 years**
- EU contribution is limited to a **maximum of 90% of total** estimated budget

ERA Chairs - Budget

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

The grant is not a measure to fund research *per se* and will **not cover research costs!**

ERA Chairs Calls

• **A total of 3 calls are foreseen during Horizon 2020 with a total budget of €240 million**

Provisonal call deadlines: 2014; 2017 and 2019

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

Call deadline: 15 October 2014

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

Funding scheme: CSA-SA (Supporting Action)

ERA Chairs – FP7 Pilot Call

- To test the measure a pilot call was set up in FP7 under the Capacities 2012-13 WP
- Call was largely oversubscribed (111 submissions) – original budget doubled to EUR 24 million
- Results of successful proposals were announced in February 2014 (11 proposals funded)

FP7 Pilot Call similar to H2020 2014 call with 2 key differences:

- Eligible institutions needed to be located in convergence regions
- Maximum one successful proposal per country was funded

Policy Support Facility (PSF)

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

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

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

Actions under WIDENING: *target "low RDI performing MS" through dedicated policy support/on site missions/ dissemination activities*

Stimulating cross-border science networks through COST

- COST = established, bottom-up, open networking framework facilitating breakthrough scientific developments; it contributes to connecting "pockets of excellence" throughout Europe and making them visible to others;
- In Horizon 2020, COST will in addition play a mobilising role especially for near neighbour countries;

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

COST WIDENING:

- Within the traditional COST Actions new elements will foster widening: dedicated Working Groups on inclusiveness & excellence, reinforcement of Training Schools; increased number of Short Term Scientific Missions and new "Mentoring Missions";
- In addition specific complementary measures for "widening" are foreseen (coordination of National Coordinators, communication and outreach);

Learn more:

[Horizon 2020 Participant Portal:](#)

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/index.html>

[Cohesion policy \(2014-20\)](#)

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm



**Thank you for your
attention!**

Credits: Telemachos TELEMACHOU