Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation

Open calls: Twinning and COST
Annamaria Zonno
A major policy intervention: the Widening Package under H2020

Measures in Horizon 2020 under **Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation**:

- **Teaming** (institution building)
- **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 in H2020 ~ **€ 800 million**
Criteria retained for Widening actions

• The Composite Indicator of Research Excellence (national level)

Why this indicator?

✓ Excellence is a key factor for performance for the whole R&I system
✓ Only indicator that can measure excellence embedding several dimensions
✓ Parameters normalised to eliminate size and population biases
✓ Innovation taken into account also through the patent applications variable
✓ Strong correlation between the Excellence indicator and the FP7 Budget share per country
**Origin:** Developed by DG RTD & JRC, part of the IU progress at country level 2013 publication included in the *IU Competitiveness Report 2013.*

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

**Methodology:**
Composite indicator of four variables:
1. **Highly cited publications** of a country as a share of the top 10% most cited publications normalised by GDP
2. Number of world class universities and public research institutes in a country normalised by population in the world top 250 universities and research institutes
3. **Patent** applications per million population
4. Total value of **ERC grants** received divided by public R&D performed by the higher education and government sectors

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

**Resulting eligible MS:** Latvia, Croatia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Romania, Luxembourg, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Portugal, Slovenia, Cyprus, Czech Republic and Hungary
Twinning: Aim, Objectives & Partnership

Aim of the action:
Strengthen a defined field of research in a university or research organisation from a Widening country by linking it with at least two internationally-leading research institutions in other Member States or Associated Countries.

Main objectives:
- Enhance the S&T capacity of the institutions-Focus on institution in Widening country
- Raise the research profile of the institution and of its research staff

The Partners: (Minimum Conditions)
- ONE institution located in a "Widening" MS/AC (COORDINATOR)
- A minimum of TWO additional partners from two different MS or AC other than the country of the coordinator.
Twinning: Proposal Design & Impact

Proposals:
Scientific strategy for excellence and innovation in a defined area of research;
Outline the scientific quality of the partners;

Activities supported:
Short term staff exchanges; expert visits and short-term training; workshops; conference attendance.

Expected Impact:
Research excellence, in particular, in the selected field of research;
Improved capability to succeed in competitive research funding;
Enhanced reputation, attractiveness and networking;
The expected potential impact of the project illustrated by a number of indicators.
Twinning: Costs & Call 2017 details

Eligible Costs:
- Coordination and networking;
- Dissemination and outreach activities.

Infrastructure, equipment & research costs will NOT be funded.

Twinning Call 2017:

Budget: €20 million
Call opening: 11 May 2017
Call deadline: 15 November 2017
Project Size: up to €1 million (eligibility condition)
Project Duration: up to 3 years (eligibility condition)
Implementation: Coordination and Support Action
Twinning: 2015 call statistics

Proposals evaluated: country of coordinator

Total proposals submitted: 552
Total proposals evaluated: 546
Twinning: 2015 call statistics
Successful Proposals: country of coordinator

Funded: 66 projects
Success rate: 12%
Twinning: 2015 call "advanced" partners

Successful Proposals: "advanced" partners by country

- Total number of "advanced" partners: 184
- Average number of partners: close to 4

Country: UK, DE, IT, FR, NL, BE, AT, ES, DK, CH, FI, SE, EL, LU, IE, NO, KR, PL, SI, UA
Twinning: Lessons learned

Lessons learned for future calls:

Clear definition of the scientific strategy towards excellence in the relevant research field;

Better illustration of the scientific qualities of "advanced" partners and their added value to the project;

Outline the expected impact of the twinning exercise on the institution in the Widening country (and even at the national/regional level) based on specific indicators.
Learn more:


Thank you for your attention
Annamaria Zonno
1. What is COST and how does it work?

1. What are the COST Actions (the networking instrument) and how to take part in them?
What is COST?

COST is the oldest and widest European intergovernmental framework for Cooperation in Science and Technology.

COST has been supporting the networking of research activities across all 36 Member Countries and beyond for over 44 years.

COST is based on networks called COST Actions. Currently there are 306 running Actions networking over 45,000 researchers per year, worldwide.
COST Member Countries

- **EU 28**
- **EU Candidates and Potential Candidates:**
  - Bosnia and Herzegovina
  - fYR Macedonia
  - Montenegro
  - Iceland
  - Republic of Serbia
  - Turkey
- **Other Countries:**
  - Norway and Switzerland
- **COST Cooperating State:**
  - Israel
COST - European Cooperation in Science and Technology

Framework Partnership Agreement
COST Key Principles and Features

- Supporting highest quality in science and technology (S&T)
- COST Actions are S&T-driven (bottom-up) - Open to all science and technology fields. Transdisciplinarity particularly valued
- Providing for **knowledge creation, share and application**
- Being **open** - Easy procedures for joining running COST Actions
- **Output oriented**, answering to the COST mission
- **COST Excellence and Inclusiveness Policy**
- **COST International Cooperation** and **Industrial Dimension** policies
- **RESEARC COST** are not covered only networking
## COST Inclusiveness Target Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COST Member Countries</th>
<th>Associated Countries to Horizon 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU Member States</strong></td>
<td><strong>Associated Countries to Horizon 2020</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia</td>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia, Turkey,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COST Implementation

- Main instrument: COST Action

- **Open Call** with **up to two Collection Dates per year** (Spring and Autumn)

- Open to all fields in Science and Technology and all types of participants

- COST Actions are networks centred around nationally funded research projects in fields that are of interest to at least seven COST countries. The financial support averages EUR 130 000 per year for a four-year period

- More info:
  - http://www.cost.eu/participate/open_call
Which activities are supported?

Workshops, conferences, training schools, short-term scientific missions (STSMs), and dissemination activities. COST does not fund research itself.

COST Actions can also pave the way to or establish synergies with EU-funded research projects. Moreover, collaboration within research projects can also lead to new Actions, thus enhancing the networking potential of such consortia.
What is a COST Action?

COST Actions are pan-European, bottom-up science and technology expanding networks open to researchers from academia and industry or to policy stakeholders.

COST Actions build teams that jointly create new initiatives/products/technology while reinforcing the innovation eco-system and strengthening European research and innovation capacity.

Every COST Action lasts for up to four years and requires the participation of researchers from at least 5 COST Member Countries.
How to participate?

- Joining a running COST Action
- Submitting a proposal for implementing a COST Action
- Becoming an expert
How to Find a running Action?

http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/all_actions
How a COST Action is established
One-stage submission process (on line tool)

New Submission, Evaluation, Selection and Approval (SESA) procedure follows the subsequent phases:

- **SUBMISSION**: by a Main Proposer on behalf of a network of proposers
- **EVALUATION**:
  - External Remote Evaluation by Individual External Experts
  - Revision and Quality Check by Ad hoc Review Panels
- **SELECTION**: COST Scientific Committee (SC)
- **APPROVAL**: COST Committee of Senior Officials (CSO)
Step 3 - Selection by the Scientific Committee

- **Scientific Committee**
  - 37 high-level experts from the 36 COST Member Country and 1 Cooperating state
  - Appointed by and reports to CSO

- Select among the ranked list of proposals received from the Review Panels by discriminating among proposals with the same marks, taking into account the **COST mission and policies**

- **Balanced COST Action portfolio**, by ensuring the coverage of all S&T fields

- Submit the final ranked list of selected proposals to the CSO for approval.
Eligibility Criteria

- Represent a network of proposers from at least 5 COST Member Countries or Cooperating State with researchers, engineers or scholars having a registered e-COST profile
- Be coordinated by a Main Proposer in a COST Member Country or Cooperating State
- Be anonymous, hence not contain any reference to the names and/or institutions of the participants in the network of proposers
- Address science and technology challenges destined only for peaceful purposes
- Respect word or page limits as described in the SESA Guidelines (in preparation)
- Be written in English, the working language of the COST Association
- Not be identical with another submitted proposal
Network of Proposers

- **At least 5 proposers** (one Main Proposer plus at least 4 Secondary Proposers)
  - affiliated to legal entities based in at least 5 different COST Countries and/or Cooperating State
  - Main Proposer acts as **coordinator and contact point** for the COST Association
    - also in charge of inviting and accepting Secondary Proposers to the Network
  - All proposers must have a registered and updated **e-COST profile** and specify their scientific expertise
    - [http://www.cost.eu/ecost](http://www.cost.eu/ecost)
Become a COST Expert!

As a COST Expert, you will have the opportunity to:
- Contribute to the evaluation of COST Open Call proposals
- Participate in the assessment of Action results and outcomes
- Be invited to take part in the assessment of COST strategic activities

New experts can express their interest via the COST Expert online registration form:
www.cost.eu/experts

An updated Curriculum Vitae with a list of publications is required to demonstrate competence in specific areas of expertise

More on COST Experts:
www.cost.eu/participate/experts
Why is COST a success?

- **Building trust** with and within the scientific communities in Europe and beyond
- Combining **stability with adaptability** while preserving its core mission
- Creating **knowledge** and facilitating its spreading and application
- **Transdisciplinarity**
Knowledge sharing leads to...

- a common understanding of problems at hand
- coordinated activities
- reduced risk
- synthesis and re-combination
- of spread pieces of knowledge
- innovation
- synergies (1 + 1 > 2)