

Spreading excellence and widening participation

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions

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MSCA 2017 'Mobility takes research further'
11-12 May 2017, Esplora, Kalkara, Malta

Horizon 2020 perspective



- Clear evidence for significant disparities between countries in R&I performance and H2020 funding
- Council Conclusions of 30 November 2016 on Young Researchers *"invites the Commission and Member States to foster and adequately reward all types of mobility ... while taking into account the need to close the R&I divide across Member States and regions"*

Horizon 2020 perspective



Supported by EU through:

- ESIF used for R&I capacity-building
- H2020 specific measures €800 million:
Teaming, Twinning, ERA Chairs, COST, Policy Support Facility to help reform national R&I policies



Science divide in MSCA



- EU-13 accounts for 12.1% of the EU researcher population but has received only 4.6% of MSCA funding in H2020
- "Widening" is **not** exclusively EU-13 problem
- Widening countries tend to apply less, coordinate fewer projects and have a higher share of rejected proposals.

Science divide in MSCA



- However, all widening countries have a lot of proposals above threshold and a majority of widening countries have excellent (very high-scoring) proposals not funded due to lack of budget...

Measures to support widening for MSCA

National level:

- Developing national and institutional strategies e.g. supporting smart specialisation or strengthening synergies (ESIF, Teaming, COFUND, Seal of Excellence, etc.),
- Creating more attractive research environment
- Providing better administrative support, raising awareness, showcasing projects.

EU level:

- 2017 NCP Call – includes additional support for widening NCPs
- Seal of Excellence
- Under consideration IF panel for widening countries

Seal of excellence



- Introduced in H2020 for SME instrument. Extended recently to Teaming and MSCA
- Seals of Excellence for **IF Call 2016**
- Awarded to excellent proposals ($\geq 85\%$), but for which there is insufficient budget
- **2 331** Seals awarded on 24 April by e-mail with a letter and certificate on Participant Portal

Seal of excellence



Main objectives:

- provide researchers with **recognition** of quality and
- support researchers and host institutions in their search for **alternative funding**

Entirely up to national funders to use it or not but Commission encourages use of regional, national or Structural Funds

- Schemes in place in CY and CZ using ESIF
- Initiatives in the pipeline in SI, HR, PL, EL, SE, LT.
- Website: <https://ec.europa.eu/research/soe/index.cfm?pg=home>



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A possible IF-EF Panel for widening

- Current **award criteria** linked to the researcher, the research and the institution. As a result excellent researchers may be 'penalised' by their choice of institution.
- Aim to create a more **level playing field** by allowing institutions from 'similar' countries to compete.
- Compatible with **excellence** principle as very high-scoring proposals are currently not funded.
- A small, pilot-type action open to institutions hosting fellows in widening countries





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