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**Call Topics for International Cooperation  
in Horizon 2020  
EU and the Countries of Spreading  
Excellence and Widening Participation**

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## Spreading excellence and Widening participation

<b>Horizon 2020 Pillar:</b>	Spreading excellence and Widening participation
<b>Programme:</b>	Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation
<b>Call Title:</b>	Widening Fellowships
<b>Call Identifier:</b>	H2020-WF-2018-2020
<b>Topic Title:</b>	Widening Fellowships
<b>Topic Identifier:</b>	WF-01-2018
<b>Type of Action:</b>	MSCA-IF-EF-ST Standard European Fellowships, MSCA-IF-EF-SE Society and Enterprise panel, MSCA-IF-EF-RI Reintegration panel, MSCA-IF-EF-CAR Career Restart panel
<b>Deadline(s):</b>	12-09-2018 (single-stage)

### Participant Portal Weblink:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/wf-01-2018.html>

**Specific Challenges:** The Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCA) contribute to boosting jobs, growth and investment by equipping researchers with the new knowledge, skills and international and inter-sectorial exposure to fill the top positions of tomorrow and solve current and future societal challenges. They are based on the principle of mobility, and researchers can receive funding on the condition that they move from one country to another to acquire new knowledge. The results from the first years of MSCA in Horizon 2020 also revealed the existence of a mobility gap across Europe and discrepancies between European countries in their ability to attract funding. To specifically address this gap in participation **Widening** Fellowships will provide an additional opportunity to researchers of any nationality to acquire and transfer new knowledge and to work on research and innovation in **Widening countries**.

**Scope:** Support is foreseen for individual, trans-national fellowships awarded to researchers of any nationality, in **Widening countries**. Applications to the 2018 call for Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions Individual Fellowships (MSCA-IF), where the host organisation is located in an eligible **Widening country**, will be automatically resubmitted to this call in case their proposal fails to reach an adequate place in the ranking to be funded in the regular MSCA-IF call<sup>[1]</sup>. Applicants who do not wish to be considered for this funding opportunity may opt out during the application stage.

The proposals submitted under the **Widening** Fellowships must fulfil all the admissibility and eligibility conditions of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions Individual Fellowships and pass all the thresholds for that call.

The award criteria, scoring and threshold for Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions apply to eligible proposals. Proposals will be ranked according to the 2018 MSCA-IF call scores and evaluation procedure and will retain scores and comments included in the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) of the MSCA-IF call . The MSCA-IF model grant agreement and the unit costs applicable to MSCA-IF will also apply to the **Widening** Fellowships.

**Expected Impact:** The expected impact indicated for the MSCA-IF-2018 Individual Fellowships call under the MSCA Work Programme will apply to this call.

In addition, the **Widening** Fellowships are expected to lead to the following:

- Enhanced cooperation and stronger networks including **Widening countries**.
- Boosting of R&I capacity among participating organisations.
- Increase in international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility of researchers in **Widening countries**.

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<sup>[1]</sup> The following "Types of Action" under MSCA-IF are eligible for resubmission: CAR – Career Restart panel, RI – Reintegration panel, SE - Society and Enterprise panel, Standard EF.

<b>Horizon 2020 Pillar:</b>	Spreading excellence and Widening participation
<b>Programme:</b>	Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation
<b>Call Title:</b>	WIDESPREAD
<b>Call Identifier:</b>	H2020-WIDESPREAD-2018-2020
<b>Topic Title:</b>	Teaming Phase 2
<b>Topic Identifier:</b>	WIDESPREAD-01-2018-2019
<b>Type of Action:</b>	CSA Coordination and support action
<b>Deadline(s):</b>	15-11-2018 (single-stage)

**Participant Portal Weblink:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/widspread-01-2018-2019.html>

**Specific Challenges:** Despite efforts to reduce disparities in country research and innovation performance in the EU, 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. 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 support 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 for this purpose.

**Scope:**

Teaming involves in principle, two (2) parties:

1. The main applicant organisation (the coordinator) established in a "**Widening**" **country** that must be either a national/regional authority or a research funding agency or a university or a research organisation.
2. A university or research organisation with an international reputation in research and innovation excellence.

The proposal for Teaming Phase 2 must:

- Illustrate the scientific and innovation potential of the future Centre of Excellence
- Demonstrate the growth potential and expected socio-economic outreach of the Centre of Excellence for the benefit of the country or region
- 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. In particular, the Centre of Excellence should have the maximum degree of autonomy in terms of taking its own decisions, being in legal, administrative, operational, personnel and academic matters. The Centre should be able to set and pay competitive salaries for its personnel.
- Elaborate on the steps that will be taken to ensure long term self-sustainability after the end of the Horizon 2020 project.
- Propose a robust human resource strategy (also encouraging gender equality), ensuring appropriate administrative and management capacities for the effective and efficient running of the Centre of Excellence.
- Include the letter(s) of commitment for complementary funding 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. The letter(s) of Commitment for complementary funding (a template will be provided by the Commission in due time) of the project will be an integral part of the evaluation of the proposal taking into consideration:
  - the nature of the commitment,
  - the legal form of the commitment (what kind of legal scheme supports the financial commitment),
  - the specific amount of the commitment and its expected impact on the establishment of the centre (the total amount of the complementary funding must be at least at the same level or more than the total Horizon 2020 funding requested),
  - the level of certainty that the relevant funds would be indeed available to that specific Centre.

How the complementary funding will be spent during the project has to be explained in detail in the proposal, both in the budget table of Part A as well as with a clear and detailed cost breakdown of the activities funded in Part B.

Procedure for Teaming Phase 2:

Teaming Phase 2 is a restricted call open only to:

- a. Applicants successfully funded under the topic WIDESPREAD-04-2017: Teaming Phase 1.
- b. Applicants who have concluded a Framework Partnership Agreement under the topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014

but have not concluded a Specific Grant Agreement under the topic WIDESPREAD-01-2016-2017: Teaming Phase 2.

For both points a. and b. above, in order not to put in doubt the result of the initial evaluation (Teaming Phase 1), the internationally leading ("advanced") institution(s) partners in the proposal must remain the same as in Phase 1.

A change of the partners from the **Widening country** for Phase 2 is only allowed in clear-cut cases for instance where there might be a conflict of interest or a new legal entity for the Centre of Excellence is created. A detailed explanation for such a change has to be elaborated as part of the proposal for Phase 2.

Successful applicants under topic WIDESPREAD-1-2014: Teaming, of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2014 and topic WIDESPREAD-04-2017: Teaming Phase 1 of the call H2020-WIDESPREAD-2016-2017 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. Based on the business plan developed during Phase 1, applicants are expected to submit a separate proposal for Teaming Phase 2. The proposal is expected to reflect all key elements of the business plan.

Nevertheless, it is emphasised that the Business Plan is the deliverable of Teaming Phase 1 and will not be subject to evaluation under Phase 2 (neither it will be made available to evaluators).

Applicants to this call will have to submit a proposal, following the template that will be made available to applicants through the submission tool. The submitted proposals under this restricted call will undergo an independent evaluation, and those selected for funding will be awarded a CSA grant (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 personnel costs of the future Centre of Excellence. While the action does not focus on equipment and consumables, these could be accepted if they constitute only a minor part of the total Horizon 2020 funding requested and may be deemed necessary to fulfil the action's specific scope and objective.

It is to be noted, that Horizon 2020 under the Teaming action will not support infrastructure costs 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 (ESI Funds) or the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) funds.

For grants awarded under this topic and type of action the following cost categories will be ineligible costs:

- infrastructure costs.

The respective option of Article 6.5.C of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied. Such costs are expected to be supported by other types of funding, including where relevant by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) 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:

- increase the scientific capabilities of these countries and enable them to engage in a strategic growth path pointing to long-term opportunities for economic development.
- 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.
- reinforce the potential impact of the new/upgraded Centre of Excellence in terms of sustained excellence through projected measurable key performance and output related indicators.

It should be explained how the leading scientific institutions in the partnership will contribute in terms of provision of access to new research avenues, creativity and the development of new approaches, as well as acting as a source for increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

The benefits for the internationally leading scientific institutions and the way they would materialise through the partnership should be substantiated.

**Cross-cutting Priorities:** Gender

<b>Horizon 2020 Pillar:</b>	Spreading excellence and Widening participation
<b>Programme:</b>	Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation
<b>Call Title:</b>	WIDESPREAD
<b>Call Identifier:</b>	H2020-WIDESPREAD-2018-2020
<b>Topic Title:</b>	Support to JPI Urban Europe
<b>Topic Identifier:</b>	WIDESPREAD-02-2018
<b>Type of Action:</b>	CSA Coordination and support action
<b>Deadline(s):</b>	15-11-2018 (single-stage)

**Participant Portal Weblink:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/widespread-02-2018.html>

**Specific Challenges:** In tackling societal challenges in the area of sustainable urbanisation, fragmented national research and innovation programmes represent an obstacle for European collaboration. In some countries, the situation has led to an underrepresentation of such countries in transnational collaboration. The different national research and innovation systems, approaches and instruments in these countries also add to the challenge. Furthermore, urban policy-making is often hampered by the limited cross-sector cooperation which does not allow a strong policy support that is based on scientific evidence.

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)<sup>[1]</sup>. The initiative enhances the knowledge and capacities 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 Programming<sup>[2]</sup> invite the Commission to support JPIs via Coordination and Support Actions.

The development of the JPI Urban Europe is driven by a strong group of countries but as to the overall country participation, the initiative is seeking to widen the participation. Although efforts are taken by the JPI Urban Europe in this sense, the results can only be expected in a longer-term as this challenge is of the structural nature.

The use of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) is seen as an essential element to strengthen the implementation of new urban solutions and concepts in Europe. The Urban Agenda<sup>[3]</sup> sets out a policy agenda for this and for EU urban policy in the wider sense. Many smart specialisation strategies include urban and smart cities related priorities and chart out the use of ERDF funding to develop and test new solutions for them. The Urban Innovative Actions identify and test innovative solutions for sustainable urban development.<sup>[4]</sup> Also the JPI Urban Europe aims to create, validate and demonstrate knowledge and solutions. The ESI Funds could provide for both investments and implementation support. The challenge is how to create synergies, complementarities and coherence as well as alignment between the activities of the JPI Urban Europe and other existing resources such as the ESI Funds.

The outreach and opening of the JPI Urban Europe to third country partners is increasingly raising interest among the latter. Building on this momentum, the challenge is to further enhance the opening of the JPI to international cooperation and thus contribute to creating a coherent European Research Area that is open to international cooperation in the field of sustainable urban development. The challenge is how to consolidate the alignment of national, EU and international research and innovation programmes, which is one of the key objectives of Joint Programming Initiatives. In that regard, there is also a need to support the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, in particular the Sustainable Development Goal on sustainable cities and urban settlements<sup>[5]</sup>, building on related international activities taking place at United Nations level.

**Scope:** Proposals should aim to implement a solid opening-up strategy of the JPI Urban Europe, for enlarging participation of more European partner countries getting involved in the JPI initiative, including from **Widening countries**, and to further enhancing the commitment and broader participation of countries. Proposals should build on the coordination action 'EXPAND – Enhancing co-creation in JPI Urban Europe through **Widening** Member State and stakeholder participation'<sup>[6]</sup> that is expected to establish a Stakeholder Involvement Platform for the **Widening** of participation and capacity building in terms of countries, regions, stakeholders and urban actors. In that regard, proposals should ensure the sustainability of the Stakeholder Involvement Platform. Proposals should engage a wide variety of countries in the activities of the JPI Urban Europe with the support of existing complementary resources such as the ESI Funds. In doing so, the proposal should build on the pilot activities implemented<sup>[7]</sup> and establish further test beds for new instruments and for scaling up innovative solutions. Proposals should further professionalise the JPI Urban Europe programme management and further diversify various instruments for creating scientific evidence, innovations and the impact. Proposals should support the strategic processes of the JPI Urban Europe beyond 2020 and also establish mechanisms for the implementation of the future internationalisation strategy of the JPI Urban Europe<sup>[8]</sup> that is under preparation. In doing so, proposals should investigate activities to align with and support the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, in particular, the Sustainable Development Goal on sustainable cities and urban settlements.

All participants in proposals must be legal entities which finance or manage publicly funded national or regional programmes in the urban-related research and innovation domains or which are institutions mandated to represent the country/region in JPI Urban Europe activities.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of EUR 1.5 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 scale and scientific quality of urban-related research and innovation activities as well as the overall coherence, complementarity and efficiency of the use of European research and innovation resources in this area including from **Widening countries**. In this context, relevant geographical spread is expected (medium to long term impact);
- Further professionalised programme management and more diversified instruments supporting implementation of the JPI Urban Europe Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda corresponding to the conditions of all types of countries as well as the JPI Urban Europe strategy development beyond 2020 (short to medium term impact);
- Increased synergies, complementarities and alignment between the strategies, activities and related resources of the JPI Urban Europe and other existing resources such as the ESI Funds, mostly present in **Widening countries** (medium term impact);
- More efficient valorisation and take-up of research findings both in terms of policy and innovation, including test beds for piloting new urban solutions (short to medium term impact);
- Improved exchange of know-how on urban R&I solutions across the EU, including **Widening countries**, and at global level (short to medium term impact);
- Strengthened role of the JPI Urban Europe for underpinning knowledge and scientific evidence for supporting the implementation of related EU policies, also in the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda (medium to long term impact);
- Enhanced positioning of the JPI Urban Europe as a privileged and attractive partner for global cooperation in the urban-related research and innovation (medium to long term impact).

**Delegation Exception Footnote:** This activity directly aimed at supporting public-public partnerships with Member States and associated countries is excluded from the delegation to REA and will be implemented by the Commission services.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Council Conclusions of 8 December 2011

<sup>[2]</sup> Council Conclusions of 12 October 2010, of 26 November 2010 and of 8 December 2011

<sup>[3]</sup> See: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/)

<sup>[4]</sup> See: <http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en>

<sup>[5]</sup> <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-11-sustainable-cities-and-communities.html>

<sup>[6]</sup> Grant Agreement number 726744 awarded under Horizon 2020 - part 15. Spreading Excellence and **Widening** Participation

<sup>[7]</sup> This task has to develop further the outcomes of the two pilot actions initiated in connection with the ERA-NET Cofund 'Smart Cities and Communities' and the Coordination action 'EXPAND – Enhancing co-creation in JPI Urban Europe through **Widening** Member State and stakeholder participation'

<sup>[8]</sup> Provided that the internationalisation strategy of the JPI Urban Europe will be adopted by 2019

<b>Horizon 2020 Pillar:</b>	Spreading excellence and Widening participation
<b>Programme:</b>	Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation
<b>Call Title:</b>	WIDESPREAD
<b>Call Identifier:</b>	H2020-WIDESPREAD-2018-2020
<b>Topic Title:</b>	Twinning
<b>Topic Identifier:</b>	WIDESPREAD-03-2018
<b>Type of Action:</b>	CSA Coordination and support action
<b>Deadline(s):</b>	15-11-2018 (single-stage)

**Participant Portal Weblink:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/widespread-03-2018.html>

**Specific Challenges:** The specific challenge is to enhance networking activities between the research institutions of the **Widening countries** 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 university or research organisation from a **Widening country** by linking it with at least two internationally-leading research institutions from two different Member States or Associated Countries. Twinning will:

- Enhance the scientific and technological capacity of the linked institutions with a principal focus on the university or research organisation from the **Widening country**;
- Help raise the research profile of the institution from the **Widening country** as well as the research profile of its staff.

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. This scientific strategy should include arrangements for formulating new (or ongoing) joint research project(s) in the scientific area of choice and describe how Twinning will take this research to a new stage, by enlarging its scope and/or the research partnership. If relevant, any links with sustainable development objectives are to be outlined.

Such a strategy should include a comprehensive set of activities 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.

A dedicated focus towards promoting the involvement of early stage researchers (as per the MSCA definition<sup>[1]</sup>) in the coordinating institution from the **Widening country** is expected. This should take the form of a dedicated work package in the proposal describing activities dedicated to early stage researchers from the coordinating institution that could include training, mentoring and networking measures within the Twinning exercise.

In general, costs relating to administration, networking, coordination, training, management, travel costs are acceptable under a Twinning project.

Therefore, for grants awarded under this topic and type of action the following cost categories will be ineligible costs:

- infrastructure costs;
- equipment;
- research costs (including consumables).

The respective option of Article 6.5.C of the Model Grant Agreement will be applied.

The duration of a Twinning project can be up to 3 years.

The Commission considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of EUR 0.8 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 research excellence of the coordinating institution in the particular field of research as a result of the twinning exercise.
- Enhancing the reputation, attractiveness and networking channels of the coordinating institution.
- Improved capability to compete successfully for national, EU and internationally competitive research funding.
- Illustrate quantitatively and qualitatively the expected potential impact of the twinning exercise within the coordinating institution (and possibly at regional/national level) based on indicators like expected future publications in peer reviewed journals, collaboration agreements with businesses, intellectual property, new innovative products or services.
- It should be explained how the leading scientific institutions in the partnership will contribute in terms of provision of access to new research avenues, creativity and the development of new approaches, as well as acting as a source for increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.
- The benefits for the internationally leading scientific institutions and the way they would materialise through the partnership should be substantiated.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Early stage researchers shall, at the time of recruitment by the host organisation, be in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience) of their research careers and have not been awarded a doctoral degree. Full-time equivalent research experience is measured from the date when the researcher obtained the degree entitling him or her to embark on a doctorate, (either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited) even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged. Part-time research experience will be counted pro-rata.

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2. Boosting of R&I capacity among participating organisations.
3. Increase in international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility of researchers in **Widening countries**.

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