

Inclusiveness In European R&I Partnership
Programme

Information

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Executive Summary

This report presents the results of an ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness targeted at H2020 ERA-NET Cofund and EJP Cofund Programme coordinators. The goal of the survey was to collect information on measures introduced by H2020 ERA-NET Cofund and EJP Cofund Programmes, in order to enhance the participation of the 'Widening Countries'. The joint calls organised by ERA-NET Cofund and EJP Cofund Programmes aim to support excellent transnational research projects with high European added value. In order to attain this goal, it is crucial to build networks of funding organisations, representing research communities across Europe, who can mobilise diverse research expertise and approaches represented by geographically balanced research consortia. However, according to the data obtained by ERA-LEARN, participation of funding organisations from Widening Countries is half that of organisations from EU14¹ countries. At the same time, the number of funded projects including organisations from Widening Countries is almost four and a half times smaller than the number of projects with EU14 participation. In order to address the Widening issue, inclusiveness measures have been adopted in individual Programmes. Nevertheless, there is a lack of a systematic approach towards enhancing participation of Widening Countries in the Programmes.

The ERA-LEARN survey was conducted in the period between June and September 2019. The survey was sent to 66 coordinators and completed by 41 respondents. The survey results prove that Widening Countries undertake secondary roles in the Programmes and rarely lead Tasks or Work Packages of Programme implementation. Only two out of 41 surveyed Programmes are coordinated by funding agencies in Widening Countries. Involvement of this group of countries is usually limited to participation in joint calls for proposals and not in other activities of the Programmes. Most Programme coordinators, however, recognise the importance of the 'Widening' concept and have introduced measures to address this issue. Such measures are employed in all stages of Programme implementation: Programme constitution, call preparation, call promotion and evaluation phases. Among the most frequent measures adopted by the coordinators are those employed during the formulation of the Programme, namely, active involvement of Widening Countries during Programme constitution and of research funding organisations from Widening Countries in core network positions, such as Task or Work Package Leaders. The active engagement of Widening Countries in building and managing the Programme may translate into greater input into call topic development or better dissemination

¹ As of 1 February 2020 due to the withdrawal of the UK.

of calls in research communities in these countries. This, in turn, may lead to increased participation of organisations from Widening Countries in proposal applications. Most Programme coordinators invite experts from Widening Countries to call evaluation panels, which can help promote opportunities offered by the Programme in research communities represented by the experts. This measure is not seen as a widening tool, but rather as a way of maintaining geographical diversity and diversity of expertise among experts.

As the Co-funded call implementation is the main objective of ERA-NET Cofund Programmes, many Programmes adopt special measures in order to enhance participation of researchers from Widening Countries in funded projects. The two most frequent actions targeting this challenge are firstly, encouraging the involvement of researchers from Widening Countries by allowing larger consortia if Widening Countries are involved, which is relevant in calls that set a limit on the number of partners per submitted proposal and secondly, survey respondents note that successful dissemination of calls is of paramount importance to enhancing the participation of Widening Countries. Therefore, some Programmes perform dedicated activities targeted at research communities that are less represented in the proposal applications/projects. More than one third of the surveyed Programmes use different types of partnering tools.

Survey respondents highlight that it is very difficult to exactly indicate the impact of each individual measure. They stress that increased success of Widening Countries is possible only thanks to a systematic adoption of various measures in different stages of the Programme cycle. It should also be emphasised that the EU contribution to the co-funded call is seen as a pro-widening measure, because it helps fund more projects, which also means more projects including organisations from Widening Countries, than in non co-funded calls. Respondents also stress that flexible use of EU contribution is crucial for the effective call budget distribution. For the future, the majority of the survey respondents note that they will continue to or plan to employ Widening measures in their Programmes and calls for proposals.

To sum up, the survey results demonstrate that participation of Widening Countries in EU Partnerships is limited and actions are needed to strengthen it. However, only by introducing a systematic portfolio of Widening measures throughout the entire Programme cycle can we obtain the expected outcome, namely a larger number of funded projects including organisations from Widening Countries. At the same time, it must be recognised, that the 'widening' approach is not only beneficial for Widening Countries but also for certain non-Widening Countries that are less-represented in EU Partnerships. This approach helps strengthen the European Research Area by mobilising diverse research expertise and approaches that aim to respond to great research challenges, while at the same time trying to bring convergence of countries' performance in research and innovation. This message is especially important on the eve of Horizon Europe. The 'Openness and Transparency principle', introduced in Framework Programme 9 promotes an inclusive approach in the design and governance of the partnership. Involving Widening and less performing countries in the entire life cycle of the initiative is particularly important and regarded as an essential component of future partnerships.

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Introduction

One of the European Union's main goals is to promote scientific and technological progress and to enhance economic and social cohesion and solidarity among EU countries. However, figures and studies show a substantial gap between the so-called EU13 countries, which joined the EU after 2004, and the EU14² Member States, something which is also mirrored in the area of research and innovation.

WIDENING COUNTRIES in Horizon 2020

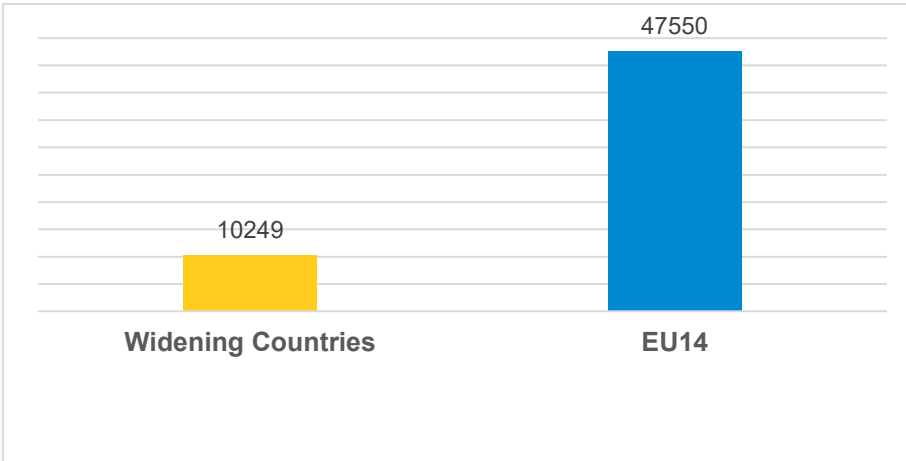
Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia
(Innovation Union Competitiveness Report 2013)

The EU13, together with Luxembourg and Portugal, are known as “Widening Countries”, that is, Member States that do not reach the threshold of research excellence based on the Widening indicator, which is set at 70% of EU28 performance in research and innovation. Thus far, participation of Widening Countries in H2020 funded projects has been more than 4.5 times less than participation of EU14 countries. The same situation is observed in H2020 ERA-NET Cofund and European Joint Programme Cofund (EJPs) - co-fund actions designed to support coordinated national research and innovation programmes³. In calls for proposals launched by these types of actions the number of projects with Widening Country participation is nearly 4.5 times less than the number of projects with an EU14 country involved.

² As of 1 February 2020 due to the withdrawal of the UK.

³ For more information please see ERA-LEARN definition: <https://www.era-learn.eu/support-for-p2ps/cofunded-p2p/era-net-cofund>, <https://www.era-learn.eu/partnerships-in-a-nutshell/type-of-networks/european-joint-programme-cofund-ejp-cofund>.

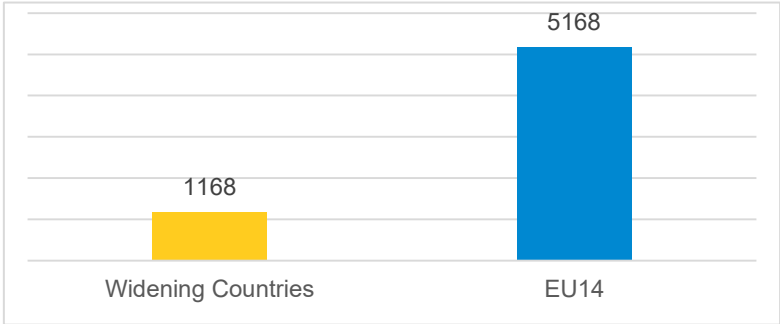
Chart 1. Number of projects with EU13 and EU14 involved, funded within H2020⁴



Source: eCORDA March 2020

The key objective of joint calls for proposals that are organised by European R&I Partnerships, such as ERA-NET Cofund and EJP Cofund, and co-funded by the European Commission is to support excellent transnational research projects with high European added value. In order to attain this goal it is crucial to build networks of research funding organisations representing research communities across Europe. Only by mobilising diverse research expertise, methodological approaches and thematic areas can significant research challenges be addressed and tackled. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to build and maintain inclusive funding networks ready to invest in the research potential of different scientific groups. Funding policies mirrored in call regulations and evaluation procedures should stimulate new collaborations and promote innovative research endeavours, which can open new pathways in a given field.

Chart 2. Number of projects with Widening Countries and EU14 involved, funded within European Partnership R&I calls



Source: ERA-LEARN database, April 2020

⁴ Excluding partnership calls

The Widening and Spreading Excellence concept has been an important part of Horizon 2020 and it will also be prioritised as the Openness and Transparency principle – in all pillars of Horizon Europe. To date, widening and inclusiveness measures have been implemented as a bottom-up approach in individual partnership calls and Coordination and Support Actions – those serving as JPI's supporting actions. Nevertheless, an integrated and more systematic set of actions should be developed for partnership initiatives to enable a stronger impact. In order to investigate widening and pro-inclusiveness measures already employed in H2020 partnership programmes and prepare a handbook of good practices, ERA-LEARN decided to launch a survey on inclusiveness targeted at ERA-NET Cofund and EJP Cofund Programme coordinators.

1. Inclusiveness in ERA-NET Cofund and EJP Cofund Programmes

The main goal of the ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness was to collect information on measures introduced by H2020 ERA-NET Cofund and EJP Cofund Programmes (later referred to as 'Programmes'), in order to enhance participation of less performing countries. The aim of this survey was to gather both quantitative and qualitative information about the measures currently at place in the different partnerships, as well as to examine their estimated impact and future actions planned in order to support widening – or more broadly – inclusiveness.

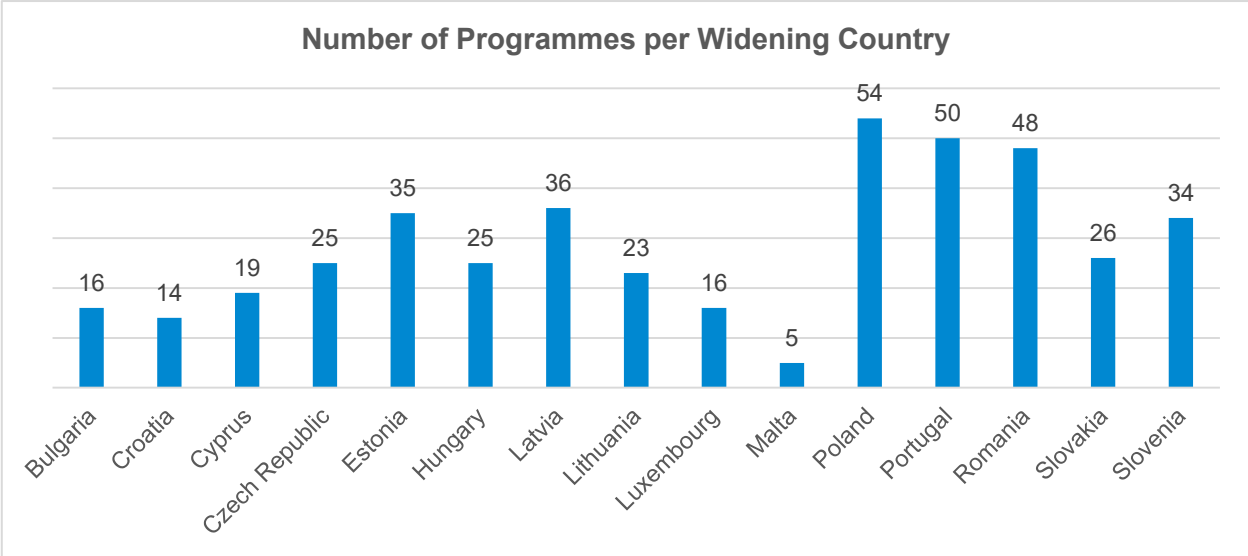
Inclusiveness in this survey is seen as an approach to building partnerships, which promotes the involvement of funding organisations representing less performing research communities and implements measures supporting these research communities in transnational calls for proposals. When answering individual questions, respondents used four different terms: EU13 countries, Widening Countries, less performing or underrepresented countries. Individual pro-inclusiveness measures adopted by the Programmes were dedicated to one of the four mentioned groups. It must be noted, however, that in individual trans-national calls, the underrepresented countries are not exclusively EU13 or Widening Countries. Instead, it might also be the case that a Widening or an EU 13 Country performs quite well, sometimes even better than countries of the EU14 cohort.

The ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness (later referred to as “survey”) was addressed to representatives of ERA-NETs and EJPs. It was open from June 5th to September 16th, 2019, and sent to 66 Programmes and finally completed by 41 respondents: 39 representing ERA-NETs and 2 – EJPs. It is worth mentioning that out of all 41 Programmes whose representatives completed the survey, only 2 are coordinated by Widening Countries. On the other end of the scale, there are two countries coordinating the highest number of programmes: Germany – 10 and France – 8.

1.1. Role of Widening Countries

The ERA-LEARN database, which provides information about all 79 Programmes funded within H2020, clearly indicates that Widening Countries, which participate in the biggest number of Programmes are Poland, Portugal and Romania followed by Latvia, Estonia and Slovenia (Chart 3). The statistics show that 28 is an average number of networks a Widening Country is involved in. This figure for a non-Widening country is almost 2 times bigger and amounts to 57.

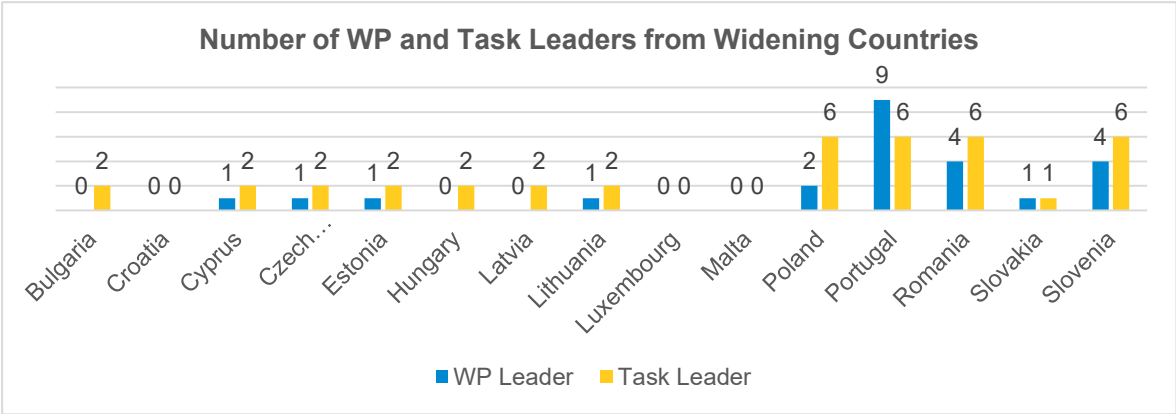
Chart 3. Involvement of Widening Countries in ERA-NET and EJP Programmes



Source: ERA-LEARN database, April 2020

In most Programmes Widening Countries play secondary roles, usually confined to participation in joint calls for proposals. Information about roles of Widening Countries in the Programmes is based on the data provided by survey respondents who represented 41 Programmes (Chart 4). The most active as Work Package Leaders are: Portugal, Romania and Slovenia; as Task Leaders: Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia. Only two out of fifteen Widening Countries – Poland and Portugal – appear in a role of programme coordinator, in one Programme each. However, as survey respondents note, a growing involvement of Widening Countries in leading Programmes’ activities can be observed.

Chart 4. Widening Countries as Work Package and Task Leaders



Source: ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness

1.2. Implementation of pro-inclusiveness measures

Out of 41 survey respondents, 26 declare that their initiatives are focused on supporting inclusiveness. Pro-inclusiveness measures are introduced at different stages of the Programme cycle, namely:

- constitution of the Programme,
- call preparation phase,
- call promotion phase and
- call evaluation phase.

It is very important to stress, that pro-inclusiveness measures are very often targeted not only at EU 13 or Widening Countries. Actions supporting inclusiveness have been also applied in cases such as Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Israel or Turkey if they are less represented in a given call for proposals.

Formulating the partnership

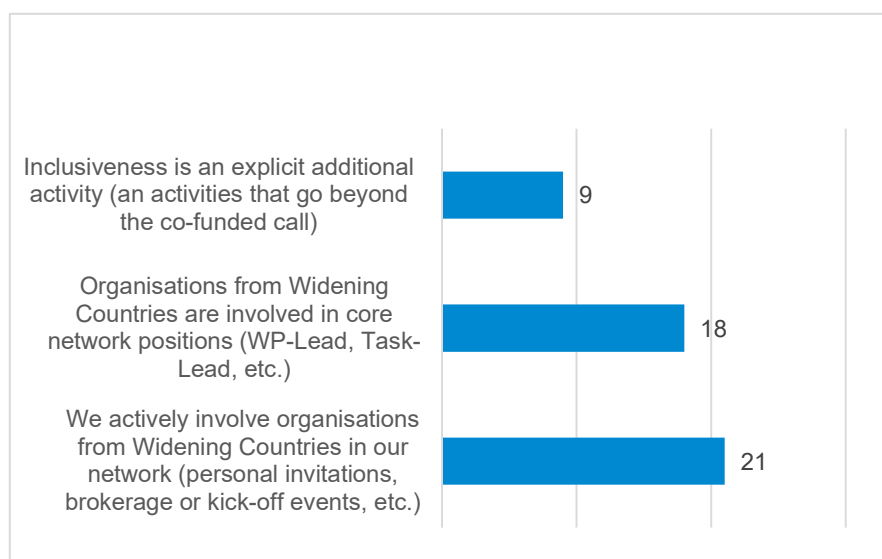
The most common pro-inclusiveness measures chosen by 21 out of 41 respondents, are activities aimed at promoting a Programme among potential funding partners from Widening Countries during its constitution. At the same time, inviting partners from Widening Countries can also be a challenge. If a Widening Country is often not represented in the group of funded research, within one initiative, it loses interest in the Programme. Therefore, introducing measures supporting widening or inclusiveness in joint calls is important. Such measures, as claimed by the survey respondents, result in higher number of projects including organisations from Widening Countries.

The survey shows that Widening Countries are less involved in leading tasks or WPs in ERA-NET and EJP programmes than high performing countries. This may be attributed to various factors, such as lower interest of national research communities or funding organisations in Partnership Programmes co-funded by the EU, limited human resources at funding organisations or budgetary reasons. Funding dedicated to programme administration provided by EU unit costs or a black box mechanism is not always sufficient to cover all expenses incurred during programme duration. Survey respondents note that closer involvement of Widening Countries in tasks related to call secretariat or event organisation may translate into greater input into call topic development or better dissemination of calls in research communities in these countries.

22% of all Programme coordinators employ widening as an additional activity in the work plan. Some respondents mention that EU13 R&I needs and priorities were included in the programme strategy. It has also been stressed that focusing on inclusiveness in additional activities helps

partners from Widening Countries better understand challenges related to the R&I field supported by the Programme.

Chart 5. Inclusiveness measures adopted in the Constitution of the Programme phase



Source: ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness

Additional activities focused on widening also entail organisation of training sessions and dedicated knowledge exchange activities targeted at new funding partners – often organised in Widening Countries (also in Widening Countries not participating in the Programme). Such activities trigger their closer involvement in Programme implementation. It is also worth mentioning that activities supporting participation of EU13 or Widening Countries are often planned within Coordination and Support Actions, which serve as initiatives complimentary to ERA-NET Cofund programmes, e.g. JPI AMR’s EXEDRA (EXpansion of the European Joint Programming Initiative on Drug Resistance to Antimicrobials) and JPI Urban Europe’s EXPAND (Enhancing co-creation in JPI Urban Europe through widening Member State and stakeholder participation).

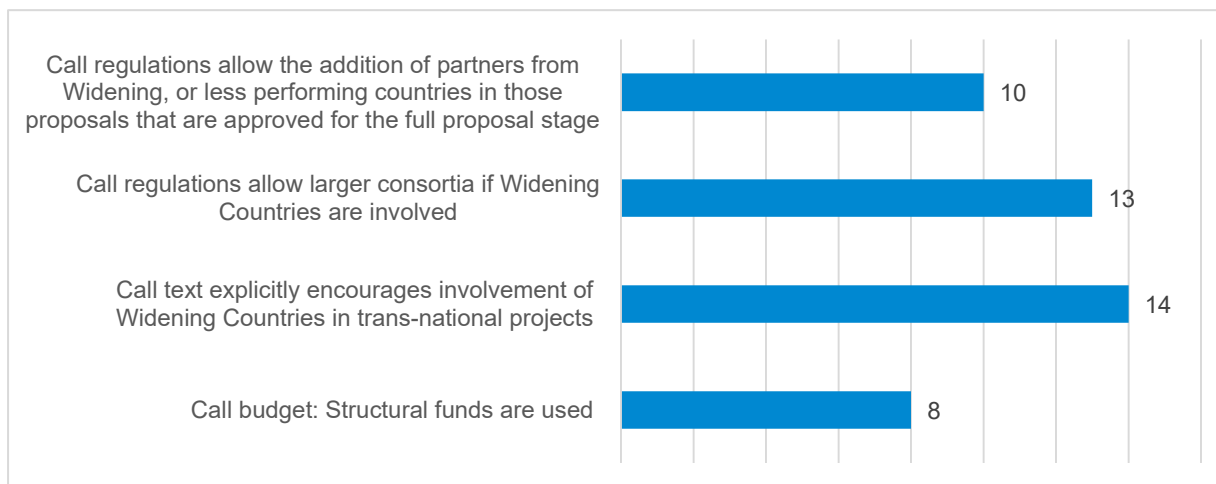
Call preparation phase

The co-funded call is a central activity in ERA-NET Cofund programmes and an essential component of EJP Cofund initiatives, therefore, the main goal of all funding partners is to award funding to excellent, competitive projects performed by qualified consortia. In order to enhance participation of Widening Countries in applying consortia and funded projects various measures have been proposed.

First of all, in order to raise awareness about participation of research communities from Widening Countries in the call, funding consortia decide to include special, explicit incentives to

involve researchers from those countries in the call text (see for example QuantERA Call 2017⁵).

Chart 6. Pro-inclusiveness measures adopted in Call Preparation Phase



Source: ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness

In some Programmes applicants are given the opportunity to enlarge their consortia if Widening or underrepresented Countries are to be involved. If the call text sets a limit of 5 partners per submitted project, 6 partners may be involved to allow inclusion of a Widening or underrepresented Country. According to available data and as reported by the survey respondents in different calls, this option is used by 2%-8% of applying consortia. Some partnership calls allow for the addition of partners between the first and second call evaluation phase. After the assessment of the pre-proposals, when the countries running the risk of underspending, their earmarked budget are identified, research consortia invited to the full proposal stage are encouraged to involve additional partners from underrepresented countries. The group of underrepresented countries sometimes involves countries other than Widening, e.g. Belgium, Ireland or Israel. 8 out of 10 respondents acknowledge that this option has been used by project coordinators.

According to respondents, pro-inclusiveness actions introduced in joint calls translate into higher involvement of researchers from Widening Countries in pre- and full applications and finally in funded projects. The widening approach may attract applying consortia consisting of a greater number of partners. Finally, the respondents also mention that inclusion of Principal Investigators from Widening Countries translate into more geographically balanced research consortia. The latter is an important added value which strengthens the European Research Area.

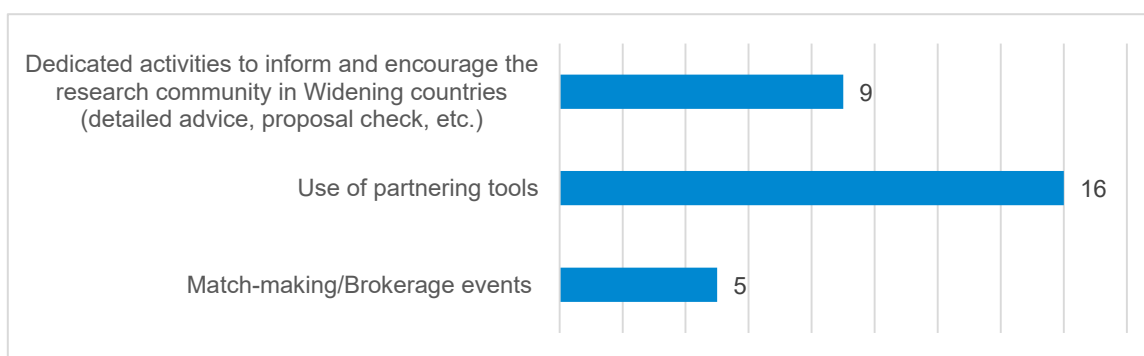
⁵ For more information please see: http://www.quantera.eu/images/QuantERA_Call_2017_Announcement_Update_03.07.2017.pdf

Participation of funding partners from Widening Countries in additional calls would not be possible without European Structural Funds. Therefore, it is important to encourage those funding partners to use this source of funding in order to enter partnership programmes. This is even more important in view of Horizon Europe, where the possibility of matching Framework Programme funds with European Structural Funds is a subject of ongoing negotiations.

Call promotion phase

Successful dissemination of calls for proposals is crucial to enhance participation of less performing countries in partnership calls. Among the most popular activities employed in order to reach research communities in Widening Countries, there is the use of the partnering tool. However, most respondents claim it is not possible to assess its impact, especially because no data regarding users of this tool is available from those who were eventually granted funding. Yet, it can serve as a useful tool for researchers from Widening Countries who look for collaborative partners, as well as their peers from other countries who want to initiate cooperation with Widening Countries.

Chart 7. Pro-inclusiveness measures adopted in the Call promotion phase



Source: ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness

Interestingly, brokerage and matchmaking events introduced by ca. 19% of all survey participants are assessed as having limited impact. This may be due to the fact, that physical meetings are expensive and inevitably available to a smaller number of applicants. Therefore, organisation of online matchmaking webinars is recommended.

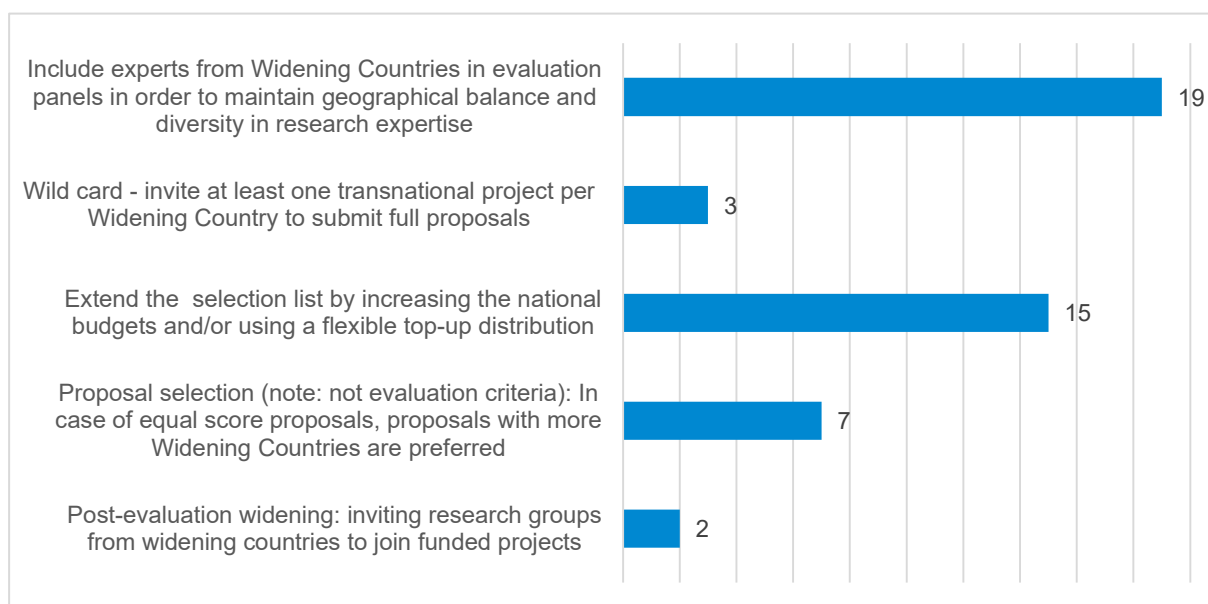
One third of Programmes involved in the survey declare that special actions for call promotion addressed to national research communities in Widening Countries are carried out within their initiatives. Most of these activities lie in the hands of national funding organisations, which may be supported by National Contact Points. At the same time, some Programmes organise research symposia in Widening Countries and invite representatives of their national research communities. During these events future calls and results of funded projects can be promoted.

Other call dissemination measures listed by survey respondents are dedicated websites, newsletters and checklists that include widening opportunities provided by the call regulations.

Call evaluation phase

An important operational goal of all partnership Programmes is to implement fair, transparent and high quality evaluation processes. In order to achieve this goal, selection of excellent evaluators representing diverse research communities, including Widening Countries, is needed. As many as nearly 75% of all respondents declare that call review panels involve expert evaluators from Widening Countries. Participation of evaluators from these countries can also help promote Programme activities, such as future calls for proposals, among national research communities. However, respondents note that they do not see this as a widening measure, but rather as a way of maintaining geographical diversity and diversity of expertise among expert evaluators.

Chart 8. Pro-inclusiveness measures adopted in the Call evaluation phase



Source: ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness

One of the measures which directly promotes participation of Widening Countries in joint transnational calls is the so called “Wild Card”. This mechanism is used in the pre-proposal evaluation stage. As a result of pre-proposal evaluation, the review panel who evaluates the pre-proposals recommends on the basis of scientific merit a pool of projects to be invited to the second stage. Taking into consideration the budget restrictions, the funding partners involved usually decide to further limit the number of proposals admitted to the second stage, thus leading to high success rates (number of funded projects divided by full proposals submitted). The cut-off line is often placed under those positively evaluated proposals whose overall budget account for no more than three times of the budget available for the call. Therefore, many high-quality and positively evaluated proposals, including those involving teams from less performing countries do not make it to the second stage. As a remedy, funding partners whose research

consortia are not represented in the list of proposals that are qualified for the second step of evaluation can be given a “wild-card”. This allows them to add to the pool of invited full proposals, one proposal placed under the cut-off line, yet evaluated positively by the experts. This option was used in two Programmes and as a result each country participating in the call was represented on the final list of proposals selected for funding.

The survey shows, that 7 out of 41 Programmes adopt selection criteria, which directly promote projects with researchers from Widening Countries or countries with a risk of budget underspending, without compromising on excellence. Full proposals that reach the threshold of excellence are recommended for funding to the national research funding organisations. When two proposals are equally scored on the ranking list, the one involving a country that is less or not at all represented in the list is selected for funding. Selection criteria favouring proposals including Widening or less performing countries can help proposals that are usually in the last places of the ranking list of projects that have been recommended for funding by the review panel. This measure usually enables the funding of 1 or 2 proposals that include Widening or less performing countries. Projects selected for funding thanks to this measure may be the only successful projects for some Widening Countries. This activity can maximise overall budget spent by funding partners, as Widening countries are often those facing the issue of budget underspend and may help achieve more efficient top-up and call budget distribution. Programme coordinators that promote proposals with participants from Widening Countries in their call selection criteria emphasise that this approach increases the respective number of funded projects.

More than 1/3 of respondents declare that since the paramount goal of their initiatives is to fund as many excellent collaborative projects as possible, call budget and EU top-up must be distributed in an effective way. Therefore, flexibility is encouraged and can be achieved by three different actions:

- Encouraging high performing countries to increase their national budgets both after the pre-proposal stage and after the final ranking list of projects recommended for funding,
- Formulating flexible top-up distribution rules in the consortium agreement. A balance between fair distribution and budget for gap filling should be maintained in order to fund as many transnational projects as possible,
- Considering budget negotiations with consortia of funded projects.

Indeed, research funding organisations with high funding pressure, i.e. organisations with a limited budget which have a large number of project recommended for funding, are encouraged to negotiate budgets with their research teams in order to save funding for more projects on the ranking list. In addition, funding organisations with budget underspending are invited to consider increasing the funding of their research teams who may partially take over task(s) from other project partners that may not be sufficiently funded by their countries.

Some Programmes decided to introduce the so called *post-evaluation widening*. This actually allows partners from Widening Countries to enter funded projects without taking part in the competition. The list of projects selected for funding is made available to national research communities from Widening Countries. Interested researchers from those countries are free to approach coordinators of selected projects and discuss possible collaboration. If the project team decides to involve the new partner, the national funding agency provides the grant.

1.3. *Pro-inclusiveness mechanisms in EC-funding instruments supporting partnerships*

Survey respondents were asked if ERA-NET or EJP rules could be seen as mechanisms supporting the participation and success of Widening Countries. Out of 41 survey respondents, 8 highlight that top-up funding may be seen as such a mechanism. Additional funding provided by the EC helps to obtain longer ranking lists of selected projects, which translate into more projects with Widening Countries being funded. Some Coordinators also mention that the Unit Costs offered by the EC can be useful for Widening Countries, whereas other emphasise that these types of Programmes encourage collaboration and mutual learning across the European Research Area and ensure equal participation of all countries. Seven respondents state that the ERA-NET or EJP Programmes do not have any mechanisms which may prove helpful for Widening Countries.

Among suggestions regarding possible measures which may be introduced to future ERA-NET/EJP type of programmes, the following appear more than once:

- EC funding should be linked to involvement of a minimum number of Widening Countries;
- Inclusion of groups from Widening Countries can be a requirement in call evaluation criteria;
- Top-up funding should be directed to capacity building or mobility components in calls for proposals.

2. Assessing impact of pro-inclusiveness measures and future approach

According to the survey respondents it is not possible to assess the impact of a single pro-inclusiveness measure. Some respondents directly point out that it is not possible to indicate what is the exact result of a single action. Impacts can come from a combination of different pro-inclusiveness actions. Overall, however, Programme coordinators do assert that pro-inclusiveness measures result in a larger number of submitted pre- and full proposals and eventually, in more funded projects with Widening Countries involved. At the same time, a growing involvement of research funding organisations in implementing partnership initiatives has been acknowledged.

Programme coordinators emphasise that increasing the involvement of Widening Countries is possible thanks to systematically applying a variety of measures under the different stages of the Programme cycle. They also recommend involving Widening Countries in the early stages of the ERA-NET or the EJP formulation and in the process of preparing the call topics, in order to address the needs of the research communities in these countries. Respondents also highlight that pro-widening measures adopted in the call regulations, such as the possibility of adding partners in the pre- and full proposal stage bring very positive results. According to some, it is vital to reach out to scientific communities from Widening Countries and involve them in Programme meetings and dedicated scientific symposia. It is also highlighted that thanks to the EU top-up funding more research groups from EU13 or Widening Countries can be funded.

Among the measures listed in the survey there are some less positively evaluated by respondents, such as the partnering tools or matchmaking/brokerage events. The impact of these measures is seen as limited or difficult to assess.

In relation to future plans, 73% of all Programme coordinators who participated in the survey (30 out of 41) state that they will introduce pro-inclusiveness measures in future programmes or trans-national calls. Among the four most popular options – three (options: 1, 2 and 4 in the Table 1 below) are the same as the most frequent actions already implemented. One respondent announced the launch of a networking scheme, whose aim would be to help the formation of new and more inclusive research consortia. Such schemes, supporting inclusiveness and capacity building in a given research field, have already been implemented

e.g. within JPI-EC-AMR ERA-NET Cofund additional activities (see for example JPI AMR Network Plus 2020⁶).

Table 1. Pro-inclusiveness measures that Programme coordinators plan to implement in future ERA-NET Cofund and EJP Cofund Programmes

<i>No.</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>No. of Programmes</i>
1	Active involvement of Widening Countries	21
2	Including experts from Widening Countries in evaluation panels in order to maintain geographical balance and diversity in research expertise	19
3	Involving research funding organisations from Widening Countries in core network positions	18
4	Using partnering tools	16
5	Extending the selection list by increasing the national budgets and/or using a flexible top-up distribution	15
6	Explicitly encouraging involvement of Widening Countries in trans-national projects in the call text	14
7	Allowing larger consortia if Widening Countries are involved	13
8	Call regulations allow the addition of partners from Widening Countries, or less performing countries in those proposals which are approved for the full proposal stage	10
9	Dedicated activities to inform and encourage the research community in Widening Countries	9

⁶ For more information please see: <https://www.jpiamr.eu/activities/joint-calls/open-calls/10th-call/>

10	Inclusiveness in an explicit additional activity	9
11	Call budget: Structural Funds are used	8
12	Selection criteria: promoting proposals with more Widening Countries in case of proposals with equal scores	7
13	Matchmaking/brokerage events	5
14	Wild card	3

Source: ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness

3. Conclusions

The ERA-LEARN survey on inclusiveness shows that the role of Widening Countries in EU R&I partnerships is still limited and involvement of Widening Countries usually boils down to their participation in joint calls for proposals. Also, according to the ERA-LEARN database, there is limited participation of researchers from Widening Countries in funded projects. In order to tackle this challenge a set of actions aimed at strengthening participation of Widening Countries in EU R&I partnerships is needed. This issue has already been acknowledged and addressed in the strategic agendas of many ERA-NET Cofund and EJP Cofund Programmes.

Programme coordinators have introduced a portfolio of activities, which help improve inclusion of Widening Countries in the Programmes and funded projects. There are some actions that are more often used by Programme coordinators. These include active promotion of the Programme among Widening Countries during its constitution or offering these Countries core network positions, namely task or work package leaders. Other measures, such as organisation of brokerage events for potential applicants or post-evaluation widening, are used less frequently. Survey respondents highlight that complementary activities, adopted in all stages of Programme implementation, namely, formulating the partnership as well as call preparation, promotion and evaluation phases, result in a bigger number of funded projects with Widening Countries involved. Most survey respondents emphasise necessity and effectiveness of Widening actions and want to continue adopting them in future programmes.

What is more and this has been reported by survey respondents, EU top-up funding is recognised as a measure supporting widening and inclusiveness. This is because it helps fund more transnational projects, including those with Widening Countries, than in non-cofunded calls.

Finally, it should be stressed, that the widening approach is also beneficial to non-Widening less performing countries who may also make use of widening measures. This approach serves as a valuable tool for achieving excellence and diversity of expertise in funded research in a given field and thus strengthens the European Research Area. This message is especially relevant for the upcoming Framework Programme 9, Horizon Europe, which introduces the 'Openness and Transparency principle' and promotes an inclusive approach in the design and governance of the partnership. Involving Widening and less performing countries in the entire life cycle of the initiative is particularly important and regarded as an essential component of future partnerships.

4. List of Survey Respondents

<i>No.</i>	<i>Acronym</i>	<i>Full Name</i>	<i>Type of programme</i>
1	ACT	Accelerating CCS technologies as a new low-carbon energy vector	ERA-NET Cofund
2	BESTF3	Bioenergy Sustaining the Future	ERA-NET Cofund
3	BiodivERsA3	Consolidating the European Research Area on biodiversity and ecosystem services	ERA-NET Cofund
4	BlueBio	ERA-NET Cofund on Blue Bioeconomy - Unlocking the potential of aquatic bioresources	ERA-NET Cofund
5	CHIST-ERA III	European coordinated research on long-term ICT and ICT-based scientific challenges	ERA-NET Cofund
6	CoBioTech	Cofund on Biotechnologies	ERA-NET Cofund
7	CONCERT	European Joint Programme for the Integration of Radiation Protection Research	EJP Cofund
8	CORE Organic Cofund	Coordination of European Transnational Research in Organic Food and Farming Systems Cofund	ERA-NET Cofund
9	DemoWind	DemoWind ERA-NET Cofund action - delivering cost reduction in offshore wind	ERA-NET Cofund
10	DemoWind2	DemoWind 2 ERA-NET Cofund action - delivering cost reduction in offshore wind	ERA-NET Cofund

11	EJP RD	European Joint Programme on Rare Disease	EJP Cofund
12	EMEurope	ERA-NET Cofund Electric Mobility Europe	ERA-NET Cofund
13	EN SGplusRegSys	A European joint programming initiative to develop integrated, regional, smart energy systems enabling regions and local communities to realize their high sustainable energy ambitions	ERA-NET Cofund
14	EN-SUGI	Eranet Sustainable Urbanisation Global Initiative	ERA-NET Cofund
15	ERA PerMed	ERA-Net Cofund in Personalised Medicine	ERA-NET Cofund
16	ERA4CS	European Research Area for Climate Services	ERA-NET Cofund
17	ERAcSysMed	ERAcSysMed – Collaboration on systems medicine funding to promote the implementation of systems biology approaches in clinical research and medical practice	ERA-NET Cofund
18	ERA-CVD	ERA-NET on cardiovascular diseases to implement joint transnational research projects and set up international cooperations	ERA-NET Cofund
19	ERA-GAS	ERA-NET for Monitoring and Mitigation of Greenhouse Gases from Agri- and Silvi-Culture	ERA-NET Cofund
20	ERA-HDHL	ERA-NET Biomarkers for Nutrition and Health implementing the JPI HDHL objectives	ERA-NET Cofund
21	ERA-MIN 2	Implement a European-wide coordination of research and innovation programs on raw materials to strengthen the industry competitiveness and the shift to a circular economy	ERA-NET Cofund
22	ERA-PLANET	The European network for observing our changing planet	ERA-NET Cofund

23	EuroNanoMed III	ERA-NET ON NANOMEDICINE	ERA-NET Cofund
24	FACCE SURPLUS	SUstainable and Resilient agriculture for food and non-food systems	ERA-NET Cofund
25	ForestValue	ForestValue - Innovating forest-based bioeconomy	ERA-NET Cofund
26	GeoERA	Establishing the European Geological Surveys Research Area to deliver a Geological Service for Europe	ERA-NET Cofund
27	Governance (NORFACE)	Democratic governance in a turbulent age	ERA-NET Cofund
28	HERA JRP UP	HERA Joint Research Programme Uses of the Past	ERA-NET Cofund
29	JPCOFUND 2	ERA-NET to support the Joint Programming in Neurodegenerative Diseases strategic plan (JPND)	ERA-NET Cofund
30	JPI-EC-AMR	ERA-NET for establishing synergies between the Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance Research and Horizon 2020	ERA-NET Cofund
31	MarTERA	Maritime and Marine Technologies for a New ERA	ERA-NET Cofund
32	M-ERA.NET 2	ERA-NET for materials research and innovation	ERA-NET Cofund
33	NEURON Cofund	ERA NET NEURON in the area of brain-related diseases and disorders of the nervous system	ERA-NET Cofund
34	PhotonicSensing	Photonics based sensing	ERA-NET Cofund
35	QuantERA	QuantERA ERA-NET Cofund in Quantum Technologies	ERA-NET Cofund

36	SOLAR Cofund 2	SOLAR-ERA.NET Cofund 2	ERA-NET Cofund
37	SusCrop	ERA-NET Cofund on Sustainable Crop Production	ERA-NET Cofund
38	SUSFOOD2	ERA-Net Cofund on Sustainable Food production and consumption	ERA-NET Cofund
39	Waterworks2014	Water Works 2014-2019 in Support of the Water JPI	ERA-NET Cofund
40	Waterworks2015	Water Works 2016-2020 in Support of the Water JPI (WaterWorks2015) - Sustainable water use in agriculture, to increase water use efficiency and reduce soil and water pollution	ERA-NET Cofund
41	Waterworks2017	Water Works 2018-2022 in Support of the Water JPI (WaterWorks2017) and of the EC Call SC5-33-2017: Closing the water cycle gap	ERA-NET Cofund

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