

# Widening participation and strengthening the European Research Area

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## Destination 1: Improved access to excellence



- A portfolio of complementary actions that will aim at **building up R&I capacities in widening countries**, also through **national and regional R&I reforms and investments**, to enable them to advance to the competitive edge at European and international level.
- Each of the five proposed actions is **addressing a different target group** of potential beneficiaries with a customised intervention logic. (ranging from individual researcher through career development, focussed networks, institutional development to a systemic impact on national R&I systems)
- Capacity building will go **beyond purely scientific capacities** since it includes the development of management and administrative capacities for the benefit of institutions
- **Innovation excellence** is the focus of **excellence hubs** where innovation ecosystems in widening countries and beyond will team up and strive for creating **better linkages between academia, business, government and society**

# Destination 1: Improved access to excellence



- **Expected impact:**
- **Increased science and innovation capacities** for all actors in the R&I system in widening countries
- **Structural changes** leading to a modernised and more competitive R&I systems in eligible countries
- **Reformed R&I systems and institutions** leading also to increased attractiveness and retention of research talents
- **Mobilisation of national and European resources** for strategic investments
- **Higher participation success in Horizon Europe** and more consortium leadership roles
- **Stronger linkages between academia and business** and improved career permeability

# Teaming for Excellence



- Teaming action is designed to 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 in Europe and the main beneficiary institutions in low R&I performing countries that display the willingness to engage together for this purpose.
- Participation as **coordinators** to the call is limited to **legal entities established in Widening countries**, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation
- A Teaming project must involve at least **two beneficiaries**: a) the main applicant organisation (the coordinator) which will be a legal entity (university or a research organisation, a national/regional authority or a research funding agency), and b) at least one leading university or research organisation established in another Member State or Associated Country as an advanced partner
- The project must have a **complementary funding** (e.g. national and/or regional funding, European funding, such as from Cohesion policy programmes, or private sources). Its total amount must at least equal the total requested Horizon Europe contribution

## Teaming for Excellence



- The project proposal will undergo a **joint evaluation** of both project parts funded under Horizon Europe and under any chosen complementary funding source. When Cohesion policy funding is mobilised, it must be consistent with the relevant smart specialisation strategy
- Proposals may be evaluated by an additional panel of experts with specific knowledge on complementary funding sources.
- In the first stage of evaluation the **R&I excellence** and the **conceptual approach** for the Centers of Excellence will be evaluated.
- Proposals invited to the second stage must include an **investment plan** for the full project including a binding commitment for the necessary complementary funding.

## Teaming for Excellence



- The grant provides **support for the start-up and implementation phase** of the future CoE including the recruitment of the managerial, technical and scientific personnel. It also covers expenses related to team members of the future CoE (e.g. their **salaries, recruitment costs, management costs, travel and subsistence costs**).
- A **minor research component can be accepted not exceeding 10%** of the total Horizon Europe grant that may include a preparatory research project.
- The **duration** of the grant should be up to **six years**

## Teaming for Excellence



- **Indicative budget:**
- 180 million EUR, EU contribution per project: 8-15 million EUR
- **Deadlines:**
- 09 September 2021 (First Stage)
- 20 April 2022 (Second Stage)

# Twinning



- Twinning aims to enhance **networking activities between the research institutions** of the Widening countries and top-class leading counterparts at EU level by linking it with at least two research institutions from two different Member States or Associated Countries.
- Participation as **coordinators** to the call is limited to legal entities established in **Widening countries**, as defined in the Horizon Europe regulation. Furthermore, at least **70% of the research activities must take place at the premises of the coordinator** from the eligible countries.
- Twinning proposals should 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. (joint research projects, 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 **research component not exceeding 30%** of the total Horizon Europe grant may include preparatory research project.



# Twinning



- **Indicative budget:**
- 149 million EUR, EU contribution per project: 0,8-1,5 million EUR
- **Deadline:** 21 December 2021

# Twinning Western Balkans



- The **coordinator** must be established in one of the following countries: **Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Kosovo**. Furthermore, **at least 70% of the research activities must take place at the premises of the coordinator** from the eligible countries.
- **Improved excellence capacity and resources** in Western Balkan countries.
- **Enhanced strategic networking activities** between the research institutions of the Western Balkan countries and at least two internationally-leading counterparts at EU level.
- **Raised reputation, research profile and attractiveness of the coordinating institution** and the research profile of its staff.
- **Strengthened research management capacities and administrative skills** of the staff working in institutions from the Western Balkan country.
- **Improved creativity supported by development of new approaches in R&I collaboration**, increased mobility (inwards and outwards) of qualified scientists.

# Twinning Western Balkans



- **Indicative budget:**
  - 21 million EUR
  - EU contribution per project 0,8-1,5 million EUR
- **Deadline:**
  - 22 September 2021

# Excellence Hubs



- Consortia must include **at least two different place based R&I ecosystems** in at least two different countries eligible to host the co-ordinator under the widening part of Horizon Europe. Each ecosystem **needs to include four different categories of actors** i.e. a) academic institutions (universities and/or non-university research centers or labs), b) business entities (active established firms with relevant revenues), c) public authorities or authorised agencies and d) societal actors (civil society organisations, associations, citizens, end users, media, cultural actors etc.)
- **Coordinators** to the call is limited to legal entities established in **Widening countries**
- Excellence hubs are an initiative to **strengthen regional innovation excellence in placed based innovation ecosystems by cross-border collaboration** on a common strategy and/or alongside value adding chains.

# Excellence Hubs



- Core components:
- Cross-border joint R&I strategy aligned with regional smart specialisation strategies and/or European policy priorities such as the green and digital transition
- R&I project consolidating academia business linkages and providing evidence for strategy building and investment
- Action and investment plans for implementation of the strategy
- Conceptual design and pre-planning for pilots and demonstrators (if applicable) in line with the strategy
- Accompanying measures e.g. to raise visibility, citizen engagement, technology transfer, entrepreneurship training, staff exchange, mutual learning etc.

## Excellence Hubs



- **Indicative budget:**
  - 50 million EUR
  - EU contribution per project: 3-5 million EUR
- **Deadline:**
  - 15 March 2022

## Support for R&I policy making in the Western Balkans



- **Support to the Western Balkans Steering Platforms for Research and Innovation, and Education and Training** (incl. support to the annual Ministerial meeting);
- **Facilitation of the implementation** of the Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture and Youth
- **Identification of common research and innovation priorities** agreed among the participating national and regional R&I programmes, taking into account international developments where relevant;
- **Contribution to joint initiatives**, resulting in the funding of cross-border innovation actions, design/implement a portfolio of complementary actions which would enable Western Balkans stakeholders and policy makers to better internationalise and integrate in EU actions and policy making;
- Implementation of and financial support to other joint activities supporting R&I, regulatory or societal uptake of results.

## Hop On Facility



- The proposal must be submitted by the co-ordinator of a consortium funded under Pillar 2 of Horizon Europe with a valid grant agreement that does not have any participant from a country eligible to host the co-ordinator under the Widening component (Widening country). The proposal must include the accession of one additional partner from a widening country.
- The action will be part of an existing project with a valid GA. Applications must demonstrate the R&I added value of the new partner and present a visible and distinct work package for the acceding partner. Proposal should include a detailed description of the profile of the new partner and its role in the existing project. The additional partner and task should be presented in a track changes document based on the DOA of the ongoing action. Selected consortia will be invited to submit an amendment request for accession of a new partner, modification of the description of the action and upgrade of the budget.



## Hop On Facility



- **Expected outcome:**
- **At system level**, it mobilises excellence in the Widening countries, increases visibility of the participants from the Widening countries, improves knowledge circulation, and reduces lack of participation of the Widening countries in specific thematic domains.
- **At organisation level**, it opens up silos of established closed consortia, improves research excellence of the Widening country's institutions in specific fields, enlarges outreach of the participants' R&I actions and provides access to new talent pools.
- **At the level of the beneficiary**, new competencies and skills for working in transnational projects including research management and dissemination and exploitation are acquired.

## Hop On Facility



- **Indicative budget:**
  - 40 million EUR
  - EU contribution per project: 0,2-0,5 million EUR
- **Opening:**
  - 4 January 2022
- **Deadlines:**
  - 20 April 2022, 10 November 2022

## Destination 2: Attracting and mobilising the best talents



- Support further progress on the **free circulation of knowledge** in an upgraded, efficient and effective R&I system.
- **ERA Chairs** will support universities or research organisations from eligible countries to **attract and maintain high-quality human resources under the direction of an outstanding researcher and research manager** (the 'ERA Chair holder'), and to **implement structural changes** to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.
- It will put emphasis on **intersectoral mobility for early career researchers and innovators** and foster a **better exploitation of existing research infrastructures** in the targeted countries through mobility of researchers and innovators.

# ERA Chairs



- Effective **institutional reforms** in research institutions in widening countries
- Better use of existing research infrastructures
- Excellent talents attracted in institutions and research infrastructures
- Reverted brain drain
- **Improved linkages and increased mobility between academia and business**, notably by overcoming sectoral barriers
- **Free circulation of knowledge and expertise** in line with ERA priorities
- Improved **gender balance** and **equal opportunities**

# ERA Chairs



- **Expected outcome:**
- The leadership of the ERA Chair holder and the creation of a permanent and excellent research group in the chosen scientific field will ensure **excellence, visibility and better integration in the European Research Area**, as well as fostering competitiveness in research funding and promoting institutional reforms aligned with ERA priorities
- **Increase in number of R&I talents** moving to host organisations in Widening countries
- **Increase in international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility of researchers and innovators**
- **Encouraging institutional reforms** in research institutions and in the national R&I system in widening countries
- **Strengthening of Widening countries' human capital base in R&I** with more entrepreneurial and better trained researchers and innovators
- **Better communication** of R&I results to society

# ERA Chairs



- **Better quality and capacity of research and innovation** contributing to Europe's competitiveness and growth
- **Improved excellence capacity and resources** in Widening countries and close the still apparent research and innovation gap within Europe
- **Research excellence of the institution in the specific fields** covered by the ERA Chair holder.
- **Increased attractiveness of the institution** for internationally excellent and mobile researchers.
- **Creation of a permanent and excellent research group** in the chosen scientific field with a spill-over effect on the institution;
- **Improved capability to succeed in competitive research funding** in the EU and globally, at least, in the fields of choice;
- Greater contribution to the knowledge-based economy and society

# ERA Chairs



- ERA Chair holders should be excellent researchers and/or innovators in the chosen field of research. They should establish a **research team fully integrated in the coordinator's institution** to significantly improve its research performance in the scientific domain of choice and to be more successful in obtaining competitive funding. The ERA Chair holder should have a position within the organisation/university, allowing her/him to make appropriate resource allocation decisions, supervise team members and freely apply for research funding. When this is compatible with the nature of the coordinator, he/she is expected to take on some teaching duties.
- Grants can have a duration of **up to five years** and cover expenses related to the ERA Chair holder and a number of team members (e.g. their salaries, recruitment costs, administrative costs, travel and subsistence costs) and **research costs up to 10%** of the EU contribution

# ERA Chairs



- **Indicative budget:**
- 80 million EUR, EU contribution per project: 1,5-2,5 million EUR
- **Deadline:**
- 15 March 2022



# Comparison of key characteristics widening actions with other schemes outside widening WP

Actions in WP	Consortium structure	Target group and scale of operation	Policy objectives
Teaming	Main beneficiary + 1 or 2 strategic advanced partners	Single centre of excellence to be modernised or created, relevant at national scale	Develop light houses and role models to stimulate reforms of national R&I system, increase level of excellence of national R&I system, mobilise new investments
Twinning	Main beneficiary and focused network of partnering organisations	Individual institutions and small network of advanced partnering institutions. Institutional scale with European outreach	Develop excellence in a chosen R&I domain for the main beneficiary with the help of twinning partners, increase visibility of main beneficiary and upskill its staff
ERA Chairs	Mono-beneficiary host organisation with optional single partner organisation	Excellent individuals and their teams, institutional scale	Excellent scientists and their teams to become game changers at institutional level, develop new research strands and raise level of excellence
Excellence hubs	Group of 2 or 3 place based innovation ecosystems based on the quadruple helix approach	Research institutions, firms, local/regional government, societal actors, local regional scale with cross border dimension	Foster innovation excellence in place based (local/regional) innovation ecosystems, improve science business linkages, regional dimension of widening, <b>bottom-up approach</b>
<i>EIC Innovation Ecosystem</i>	<i>Network of EU level actors or entities whose functional goal is to enable technology development and innovation</i>	<i>Funding agencies, RTOs, academic institutions, venture capitalists operating at-European scale all countries</i>	<i>Joint development and implementation of funding programmes, connecting, where relevant in cooperation with the EIT, with national and regional innovation actors and topics, <b>top down approach</b></i>
<i>EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)</i>	<i>Local organisations associated to EIT KICs</i>	<i>Local universities, companies and other actors in countries regions with status of modest and moderate innovators (beyond widening countries)</i>	<i>Development of entrepreneurial skills, prizes, accelerators etc. in the context of KICs</i>

# COST – 50 years proven track record in research collaboration

- 38 COST Members

Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, The Republic of North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and United Kingdom

- 1 Cooperating Member

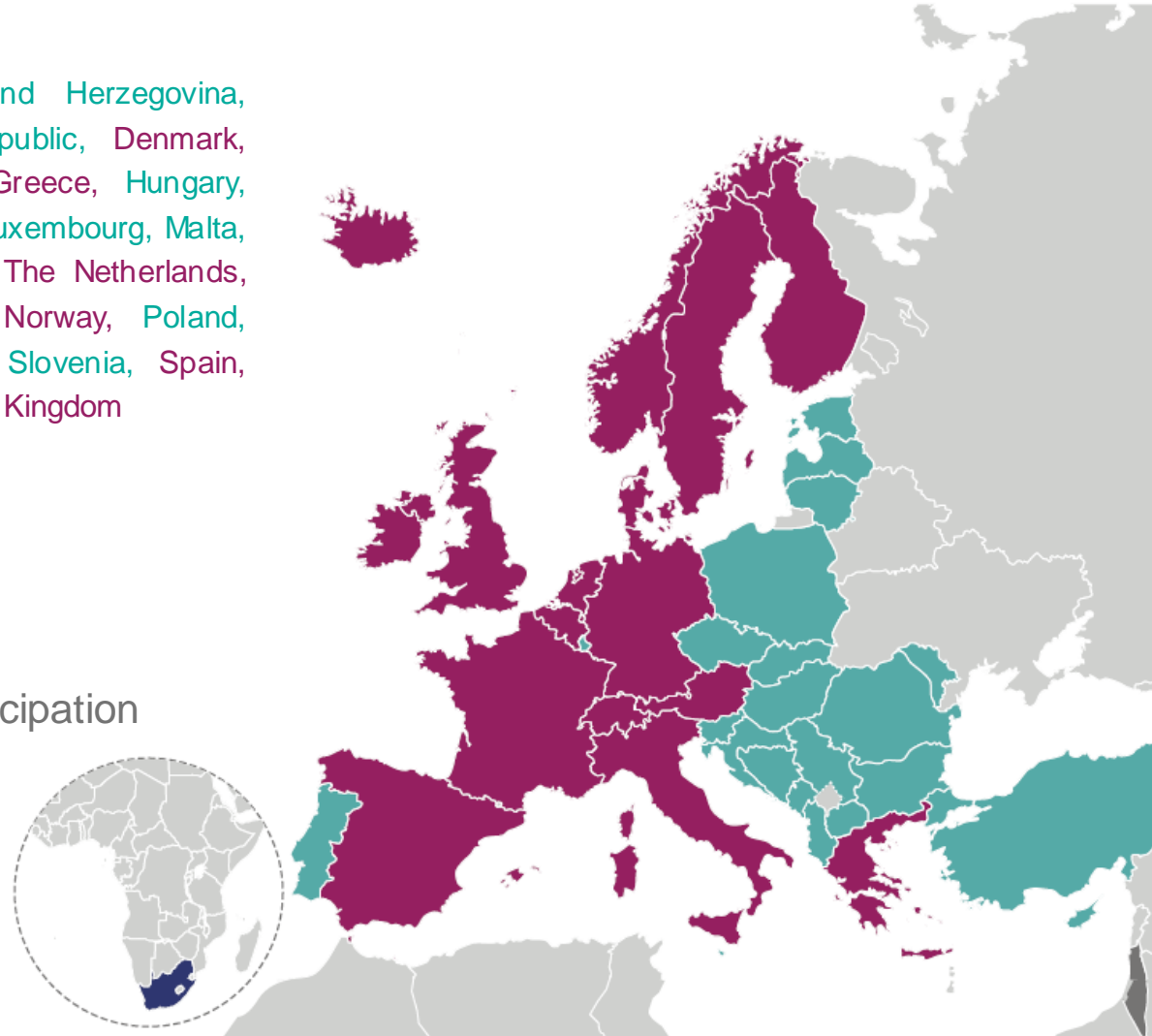
Israel

- 1 Partner Member

South Africa

- Near Neighbour Countries participation

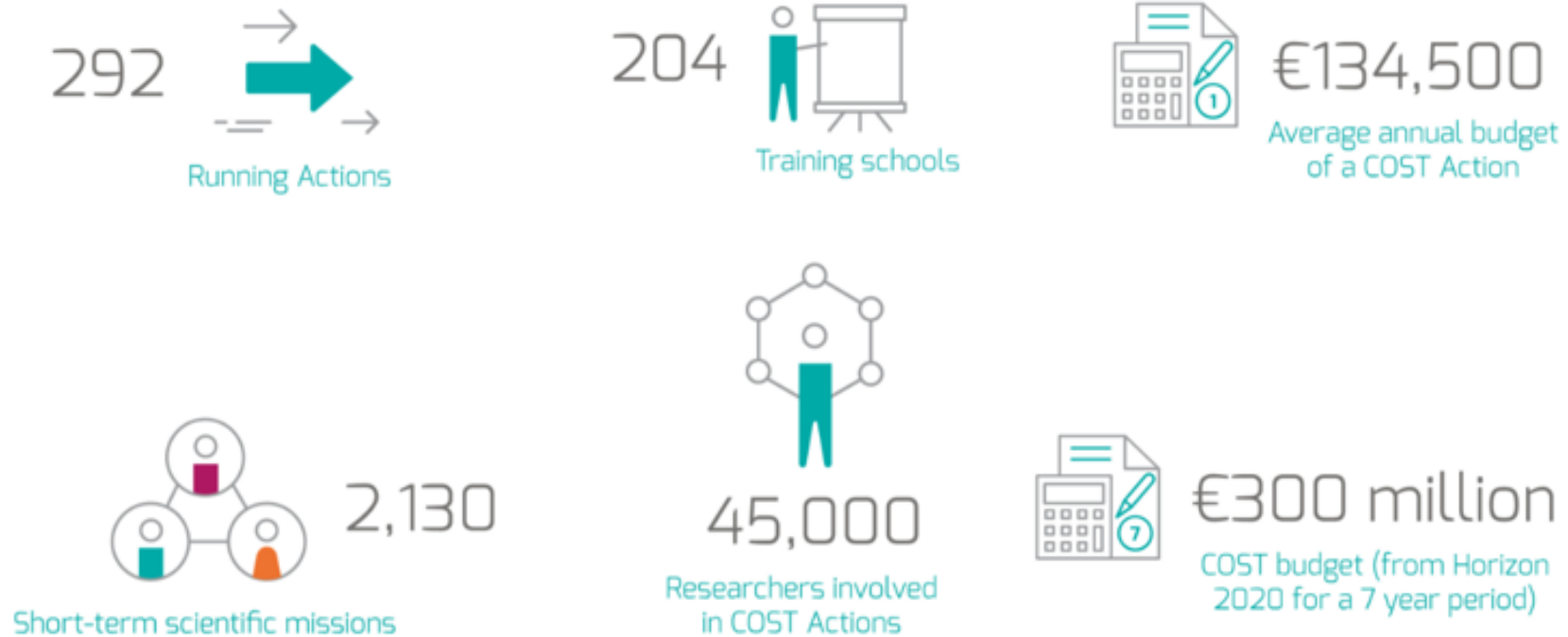
Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo\*, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine\*\*, Russia, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine



\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

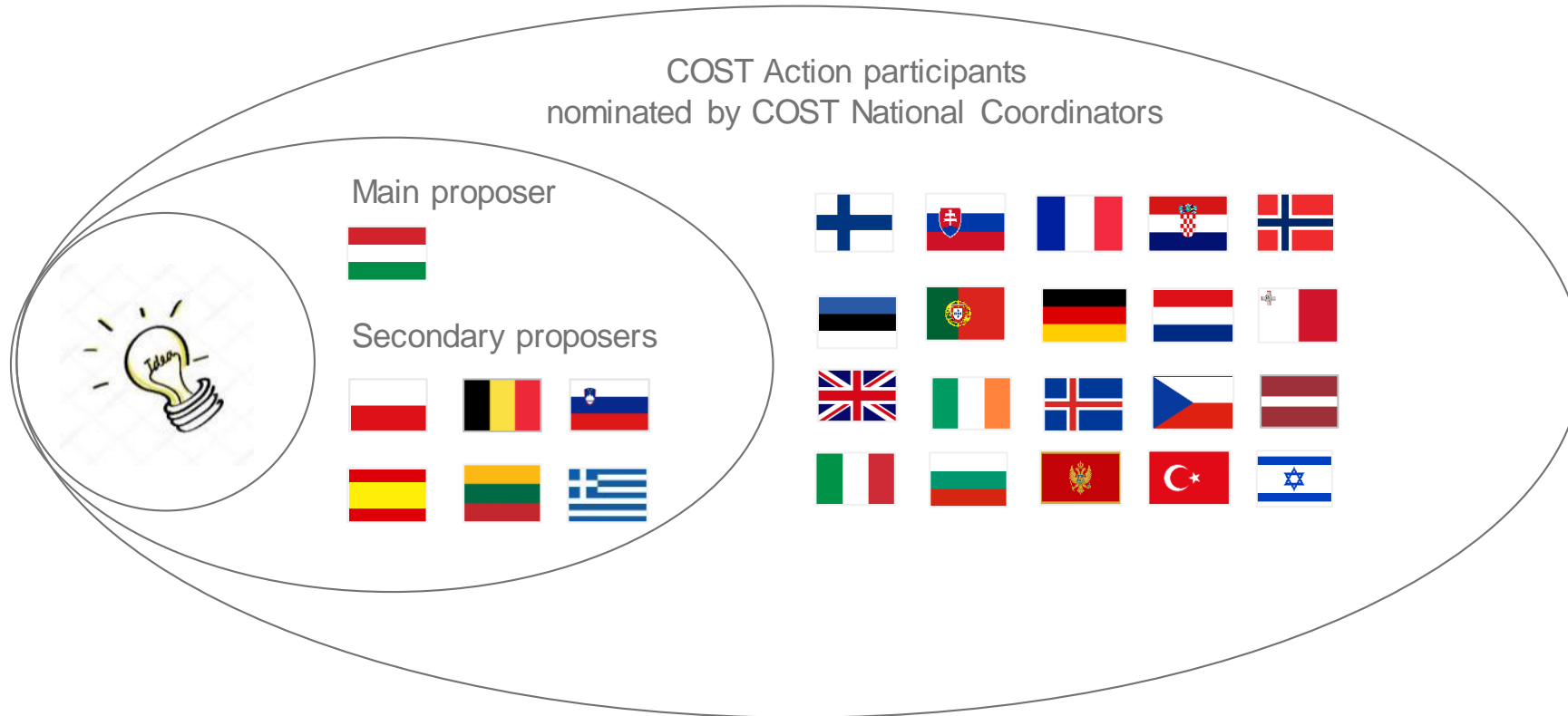
\*\*This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

# COST key figures of 2019

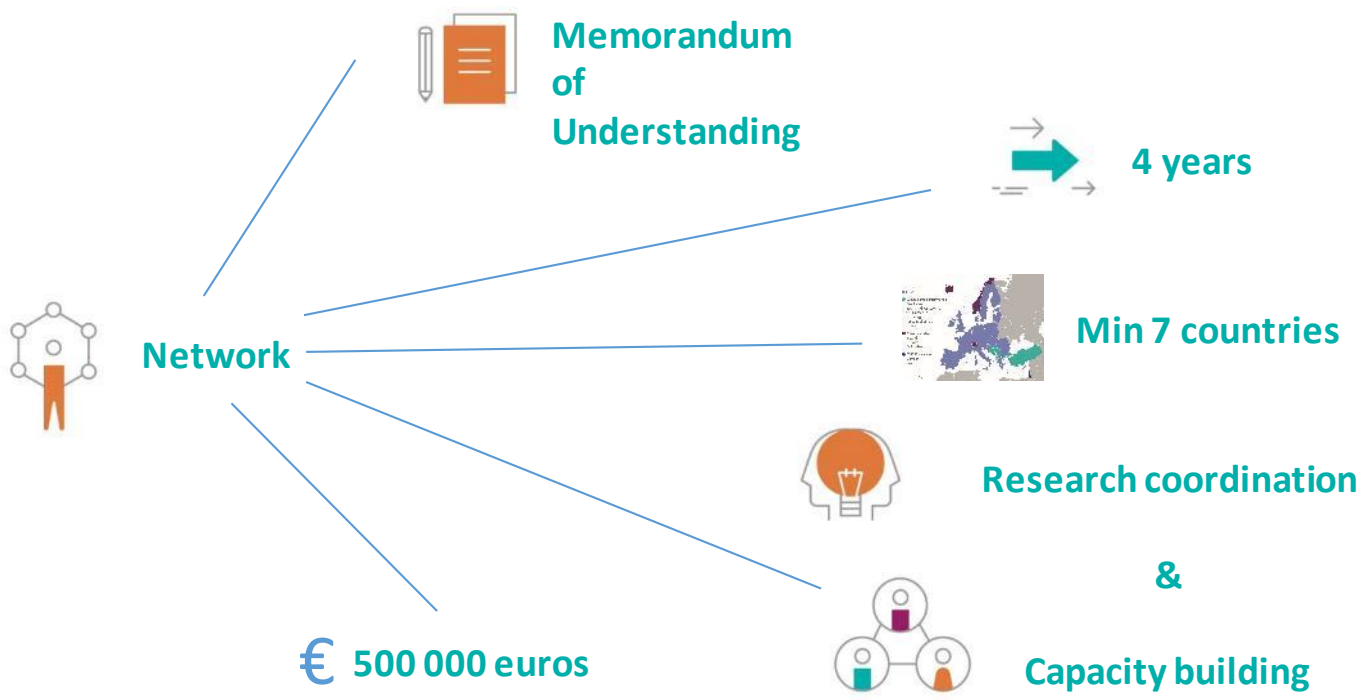


*COST: The networking tool in the ERA and the pre-portal to other ERA funding schemes*

# How it works?



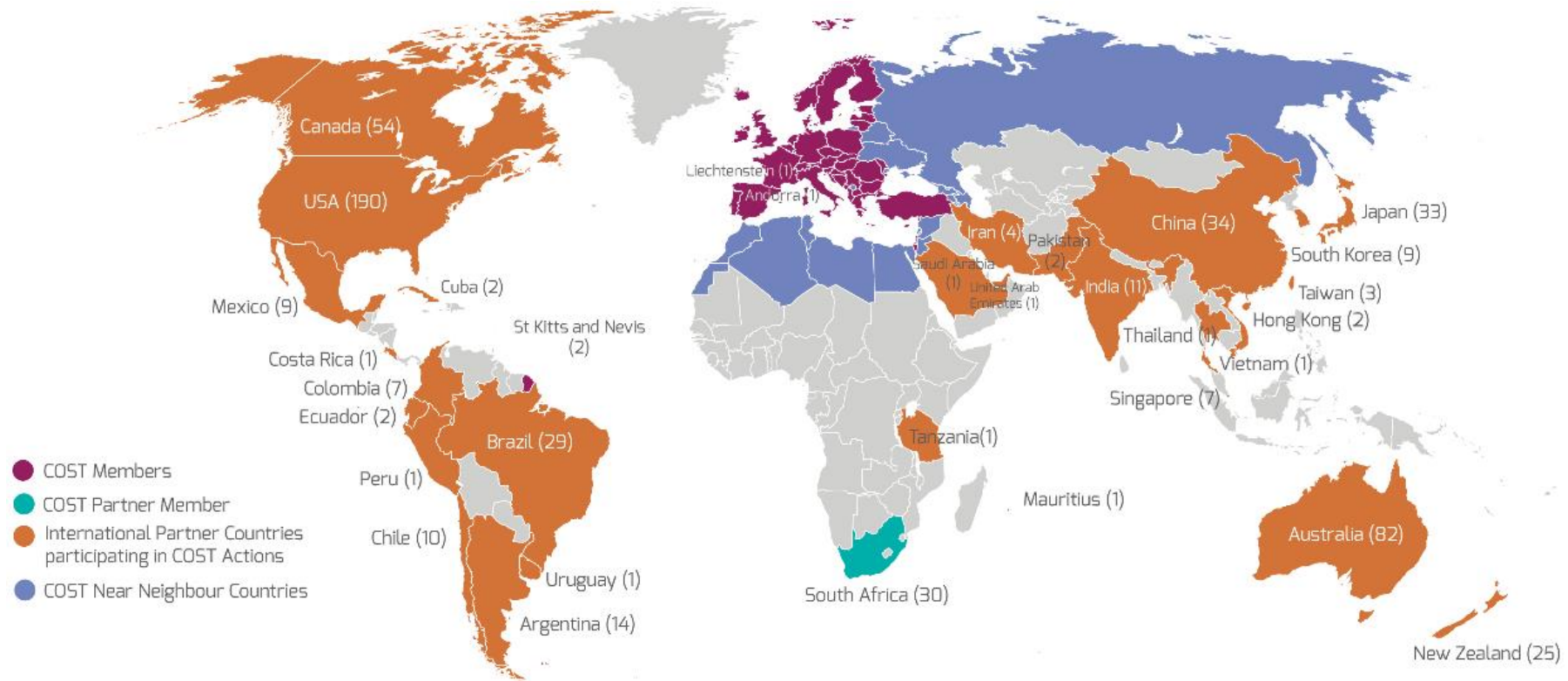
# What is a COST Action?



## Role of COST in the ERA - 3 Strategic Priorities

- 1 Promoting and spreading excellence
- 2 Fostering interdisciplinary research for breakthrough science
- 3 Boosting careers young researchers

# Promoting and spreading excellence



# Dedicated measures for active ITC participation



## COST Info Days

- Targeted to ITC
- combined with high-level meeting ITC government, including NCP



## Proposals

- Eligibility
- External experts
- Inclusiveness policy



## COST Actions

- COST Action Leadership
- Conference grant for PhD students and young researchers
- Pre-payment for STSM



## COST Academy

- Leadership workshop
- Finance/Admin workshop
- Science Communication training
- Mentoring GH
- Mentoring Chair



## COST Acting as a pre-portal for FP funding

### Horizon 2020 applications reported by finished COST Actions

Total Actions with finished Final Action Report	Submitted H2020 proposals reported	Approved H2020 projects reported	Success rate
233	798	296	37%

# Thank you!

## Contact and engage with us!

 @COST.Programme

 @COSTprogramme

 COST Association

 COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)

“ *The opportunity for science lies in creating an unlimited space where crossovers between ideas and people can change the world for the better.* ”

# Thank you!

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