



Funded by
the European Union



NCP_
WIDERA.NET

Study Visits to advanced partners

Maria Mikroni, FORTH/PRAXI

24/09/2024

Our Task

- **What:** organize min. 6 study visits of widening applicants, researchers and RMAs to advanced partners
- **Duration:** 3 days
- **KPI:** 150 participants
- **Why?:** Access to excellent practices, expansion of collaborative networks
- **How?:** Dedicated support under Advance Europe Package (travel grants to applicants, hosting expenses for Hosts)
- **Reimbursing partners:** 5 travels (visitors) to allocate

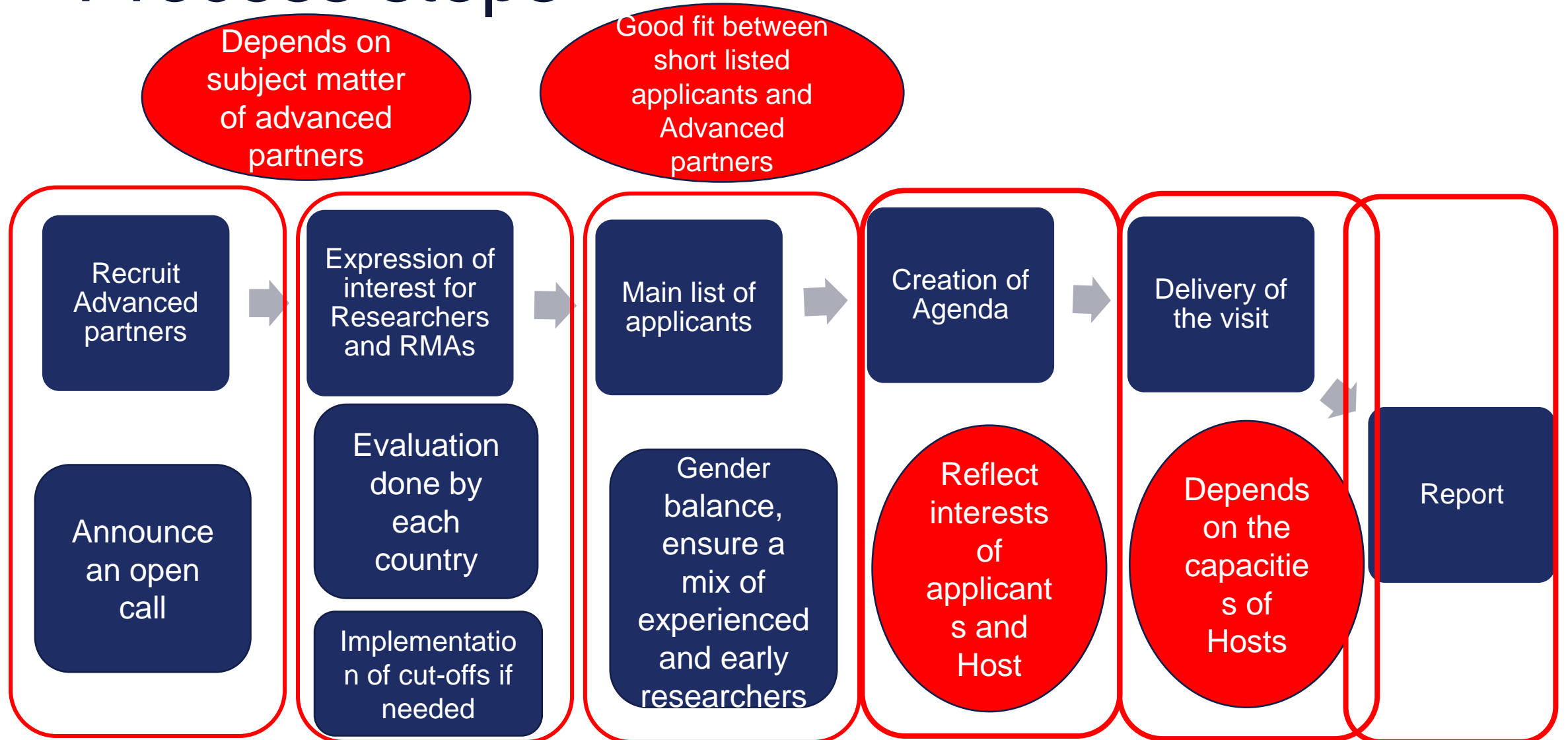
Our Task

- Benefits for participants:
 - Access to **organizational best practices** on research management (pre & post award, innovations services)
 - **Training** on cross-cutting issues (i.e. scholarly writing, proposal writing)
 - **Networking**, cross –fertilization of ideas
 - **Funding opportunities:** Interaction with WIDERA NCPs and other funding specialists

Our Task

- **Benefits for the host institutions**
 - Expand collaborative networks with countries high in the EC policy agenda
 - Discuss smaller countries' perspectives
 - Tap into funding opportunities as advanced partners
 - Explore collaborations

Process steps



Selection Criteria

Researchers	RMAs	Criteria
V	V	Number and type of grants raised at EU/International level
V	V	Brief description of indicative national/international project(s) you have participated in
V	V	Number of projects submitted in the last 2 years, number of successful proposals
V		Up to 5 publications
V		Brief description of supervision activity (thesis/dissertation) or leadership activity undertaken
V		Brief description of valorisation experience (collaboration with industry, patents, spin-offs, licensing), if any
V		Brief description of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) practices you have undertaken, if any
V	V	Good command English, at least of B2 level or equivalent
V	V	CV – EUROPASS
V	V	Endorsement letter from your institution

Preparation - Selection – Follow-up

- Each **reimbursing partner (NCP organization)** declares interest to participate in a given study visit
- Each **participating reimbursing partner** disseminates the call in its country

- Remote evaluation of applicants: Each reimbursing partner evaluates remotely its country's incoming applications
- Consensus: The partners meet and reach out a consensus regarding the eligibility of the short-listed applications
- Acceptance/rejection letters to participants

- Dispatch of the application forms to the Hosts
- Consultation with Host on the agenda, pre-meetings with visitors

Reporting/follow-up: Visitors submit a detailed report on activities performed and possible outlook for the future for future.

National Contact points' role

PREPARATORY PHASE

- Task leaders, WP leader, co-leader, project coordinator
- Project Partners from the advanced country
- Other project partners
- NCP organisations beneficiaries of the FST

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE (Action Plan)

- Support logistics
- Bridge perspectives /facilitate discussions
- Presentation of WIDERA calls
- Observe the roll-out of the visit
- Report and integrate follow-up into next visits.

Study Visits

- 1st study visit for Research Managers and Administrators (RMAs) was held on **14-16 February 2024** at the **Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia** (Spain)
- 2nd study visit for RMAs was organised on **14-16 May 2024** at **Tampere University** (Finland)
- 3rd study visit for RMAs was held on **26-28 June 2024** at consortium of **Spanish Institutions in Health – Environment** (ICM/CSCI, IDAEA/CSIC, ISGlobal, VHIO)

Upcoming study visits

- 4th study visit **University of Turku** on **25-27 September 2024** for Researchers
- 5th study visit **German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI)** on **15-17 October 2024** for Researchers and RMAs
- (in progress the discussions for the last SV in Italy)

1st Study Visit - Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia

Interdisciplinary research in the intersection of **engineering** and **life sciences** (nanomedicine, cell engineering, ICT for health, etc), national/international collaborative networks (research/business sector/society), participation in international projects and framework programmes (incl. ERC grants under HE, MSCA and FET under H2020, ERA-Net projects)

Host Unit: Strategic Initiatives Unit

Type of Participants: RMAs

Pre-requisite for candidates: n/a

Number of visitors: **19 participants** (PM, TTO, strategic planning, research background) from **12 countries**

Participating countries: Armenia, Czechia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Greece, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Tunisia, Spain (Canaria Islands)



1st Study Visit - Agenda items/topics of discussion/key points

- **Preparatory meetings** (with project partners / all contact details submitted)
- **Information session** core units IBEC by Head of the Unit, role/activities/links to the Strategic Vision of the Institution (Strategic Initiatives, Project management office, Communications and Public relations, Technology Transfer, Human Resources-Research Management) and cross-cutting issues (open science practices, ethics, gender related aspects)
- Dedicated presentation in relation to the **management of core facilities** and small visit
- **Interactive session:** tour de table during the first day – brief presentation on participants role/background) and open discussion during the last day on the basis of the presentation on funding opportunities and recommendations for next SVs
- Dedicated presentation and session by the partners of **NCP_WIDERA.NET project** on project's activities/services and funding opportunities under CL1 and WIDERA programme

2nd Study Visit - Tampere University

Multidisciplinary foundation - based university which conducts scientific research in **technology, health** and **society** organised in seven faculties. It is Finland's second largest university and it has the 3rd largest HE project portfolio of >100 projects ranked among top-80 organisations participating currently in HE.

Host Unit: Research and Innovation Services

Type of Participants: RMAs

Pre-requisite for candidates: at least two years of experience

Number of visitors: **23 participants** (PM, TTO, strategic planning, research background) from **11 countries**

Participating countries: Armenia, Albania, Lithuania, Latvia, Greece, Malta, Romania, Georgia, Moldova, North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Tenerife

2nd Study Visit - Agenda items/topics of discussion/key points

- **Information session** about Research and Innovation Services (role/activities of 5 teams -Research Development, Pre-award and post-award, innovation and partnerships) including hints for success factors (upskilling of staff/researchers, digitization, external relations/networking) - cross-cutting issues (open science practices, research ethics and AI), placing RMAs in the general ERA framework
- **Interactive session:** participants' involvement (prior to the SV, reflections on presentations/mapping of RM structures at national level/success stories/wrap-up (post-it)/open channel for future collaborations (teams)
- Dedicated presentation and session by the partners of **NCP_WIDERA.NET project** on project's activities/services and funding opportunities under the WIDERA programme

3rd Study Visit - Consortium of Spanish Institutions

Consortium/Joint Study Visit following a multidisciplinary approach by Spanish Institutions conducting scientific research in the area of **health** and **environment (marine)**. Severo Ochoa Centre of Excellence Accreditation (national funds)

Host Unit: ICM/CSCI (oceanography/biosciences), IDAEA/CSIC (envi/water research), ISGlobal (health), VHIO (health) - Premises of the Institute of Marine Science and Biomedical Research Park (PRBB)

Type of Participants: RMAs

Pre-requisite for candidates: scientific background relevant to areas of health/environment

Number of visitors: **19 participants** (PM, TTO, strategic planning, research background) from **13 countries**

Participating countries: Albania, Cyprus, Lithuania, Greece, Malta, Romania, Georgia, Moldova, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland, Spain (Canaria Islands and Tunisia)

3rd Study Visit - Agenda items/topics of discussion/key points

- **Preparatory meetings** (with all key players – teams platform utilised-orientation – [link to previous SV](#))
- **Information session** about the structure of Centres (research support office, project management, tech transfer, core facilities/participation in FP (Missions/Pillars I and II) - cross-cutting issues (open science practices, citizen science, gender equality)
- Dedicated session in visits in **core facilities** (Guided Visit at ICM and PRBB)
- **Interactive session:** prior to the SV-preparation of the orientation (job title, tasks, expectations), networking (funding opportunities-collaboration on open calls)
- Dedicated presentation and session by the partners of **NCP_WIDERA.NET project** on project's activities/services and funding opportunities under the WIDERA programme



4th Study Visit - University of Turku (Finland)

University of Applied Sciences | Faculty of Engineering and Business and Health and Wellbeing.

Areas of interest: Water/environmental engineering, energy, digitisation and AI, Social sciences and health inclusion. Regional developer with more than 200 projects running yearly in 30 research groups and three faculties Arts Academy, School of Engineering and Business, and the School of Health and Well-Being.

Type of Participants: Researchers

Pre-requisite for candidates: Experience in international research projects, Having a vision for added value from international cooperation and Work experience in a compatible area to the interests of Turku University of Applied Sciences (to match at least 1-3 of the areas below)

Number of visitors: 15 participants from 11 countries

Participating countries: Armenia, Albania, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Kosovo, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey and Spain (Canary Islands)

4th Study Visit - Expected programme and activities

Preparatory meetings (with all key players – teams platform utilised)

What the programme includes:

- Laboratory and research infrastructure visits
- Workshop of Scholarly writing
- Opportunity to learn recent results from Research Groups
- Ideation workshops and brainstorming on collaborative project ideas
- Networking event
- Reception at the Twon Hall

- Dedicated presentation and session by the partners of **NCP_WIDERA.NET project on project's activities/services and funding opportunities under the WIDERA programme**

5th Study Visit - University of DFKI | Robotics Innovation Center

The DFKI Robotics Innovation Center is a young, dynamically growing research center with 110 employees from all over the world. It is composed of three fundamental research groups on advanced AI Mechanics & Control, Quantum Computing and Interaction & Learning. Up to 60 student assistants support the individual projects. The Robotics Innovation Center closely cooperates with the Robotics Group at the University of Bremen.

Host Unit: Project Acquisitions, Administration & Services (PAAS)

Type of Participants: Researchers and RMAs

Pre-requisite for candidates: The relevance of the application to the DFKI research groups and application-oriented teams will be assessed.

Number of visitors: 21 participants from 13 countries

Participating countries: Armenia, Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Malta, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Turkey

5th Study Visit - Expected programme and activities

Preparatory meetings (with all key players – teams platform to be utilised)

Applicants from the participating Widening countries will have the chance to learn from experienced professionals and senior specialists such as the Center's Director, Department Manager, Senior Researcher and experienced researchers and engineers.

The visit will provide:

- A platform for all scientific teams of the Center to showcase their ongoing projects and foster an environment conducive to identifying academic overlaps and synergies with the visitors
- Infrastructure tour
- Discussion of ideas for collaboration
- Presentations by the Projects Acquisition Unit (PAAs) unit on enabling processes for sustainability and best practices

Concluding remarks (1)

Preparatory phase

- Application process easy to follow
- Limitations/important notes set by the hosts on the basis of their interest and expectations
- More interest for RMAs so far
- Preparatory meetings with applicants to adjust the programme (orientation and brief on important documents/info about the institution)
- Teams platform

Implementation of SV

- More interactive sessions and networking
- Presentation of funding opportunities during the 1st day
- Guide visit in facilities (especially for SV that target researchers)

Concluding remarks (2)

Implementation of SV

- Smaller groups may work better
- Different motives of participants
- High-level participants (i.e. Vice Rectors in their countries' universities) and varied degree of the "Mandate for Change"
- Differences in organization processes for Research Management
- More emphasis into how advanced partners evolved to the point they are now

Follow-up actions: open channel (teams, etc), evaluation form, collaboration on open calls

Thank you for your attention

