

# Which Role for Widening?

## Fostering Innovation Ecosystems in Europe

#Widening  
#BrusselsFutureTalks  
#InnovativeEcosystems

20 November 2023  
13:00-15:30 CET | Brussels

Jointly organised by



Horizon Europe aims to ensure Europe's global competitiveness. In order to unleash the full potential of the European Research Area, efforts are being made to increase the participation of countries with low R&D performance to overcome the significant disparities between countries. The aim of the Widening programme is to ensure scientific excellence in all EU Member States and to increase the participation in Horizon Europe of those Member States that are less established in research and innovation - the so-called Widening countries. The Widening actions are experiencing lively demand and participation under Horizon Europe.

But how can these be even more effective in the future in the face of growing social and economic challenges? Preparations for the next seven-year EU research framework have already kicked off. The European Commission has already signalled that it classifies Widening as a central part of it, but that it sees a need for changes, as already stated by some Member States. This further orientation is of great importance for bridging the innovation gap and by what means this can be achieved. The debate on how to operationalise and simplify synergies between Cohesion Policy and Horizon Europe has gained momentum and will gain even more in the light of the forthcoming discussions on the programming period 2028-2034. Widening is an important element of such synergies.

This event will gather experts from EU institutions, practitioners and national stakeholders to provide a forum to discuss lessons learnt and future perspectives of Widening, and path the way for a robust programme in the future. The following questions will guide the debate:

- What are the characteristics of the systems of innovation in Central and Eastern European countries?
- What experiences and added value for the participating institutions characterise successful widening projects?
- How can Widening actions be used as a key driver for innovation ecosystems at all levels?
- How can smaller countries and regions specialize even more and align their strategies closely with the existing economic and scientific systems and actors?
- How can the intelligent combination of funding along national and European strategies ("synergies") contribute to structural progress?

Join us for an interactive exchange and share your experiences from your perspective! For this edition, we have partnered with the National Centre for Research and Development, Poland.

Please register via: [brussels-futuretalks@dlr.de](mailto:brussels-futuretalks@dlr.de)



# AGENDA

12:30 – 13:00 Light networking lunch

13:00 – 13:10 WELCOME and INTRODUCTION

- **Ewa Kocińska-Lange**, Director, NCBR Office in Brussels
- **Oliver Rohde**, Head of Department for Policy Issues, DLR Projektträger (Germany)

13:10 – 13:25 KEYNOTE:

Systems of Innovation in Central and Eastern European countries by  
**Dr. Mariia Shkolnykova**, University of Bremen, DE (Innovation and Structural Economics) / Masaryk Universität, CZ (Business Management).

13:30 PANEL 1: **WIDENING Actions as a key driver for Pockets of Excellence**

Introduction by **Stefan Weiers**, Head of sector, Widening, ERA & Research Infrastructure Programming, European Commission (DG RTD)

- **Maciej Malawski**, Director of SANO - Centre for Computational Medicine & Associate Professor at Institute of Computer Science AGH, Teaming Project Coordinator (Poland) and **Dr. Olav Zimmermann** – SANO Teaming-Project Advanced Partner; SDL Biology, Jülich Supercomputing Centre (Germany)
- **Ewa Chomicz**, Policy and Engagement Manager, European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), Brussels
- **Pedro Dias**, SolarHub Project (Excellence Hub); Policy Director, Solar Heat Europe (ESTIF), Brussels

Followed by: DISCUSSION, Q&As

14:30 PANEL 2: **Connecting open and inclusive innovation ecosystems in Europe**

- **Justyna Adamska**, Deputy Director, Poznan Science and Technology Park (Poland)
- **Thomas Lämmer-Gamp**, Head of Unit Regional Policies (DLR Projektträger, Germany)
- **Marcin Kardas**, Deputy Director, Innovation & Commercialisation, National Centre for Nuclear Research (Poland)
- **Ana Barjasic**, European Innovation Council (EIC) Board Member, Chair of the Widening Working Group; Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Connectology (Croatia)

Followed by: DISCUSSION, Q&As

15:30 CLOSING REMARKS

- **Oliver Rohde**, Head of Department for Policy Issues, DLR Projektträger (Germany)

15:35 – 16:00 GET TOGETHER

Moderated by **Stella Reschke** (DLR Projektträger) **Ewa Kocińska-Lange** (NCBR)

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Together, we have the tools and knowledge to help shape Europe’s future. Join us for the Brussels: FutureTalks – paving the way for tomorrow, today!

