Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the first edition of the EURAXESS ASEAN quarterly newsletter 2018.

In October 2017, the European Commission launched the Work Programme 2018-2020 of Horizon 2020, the EU’s Research and Innovation funding programme. Horizon 2020 is the largest multinational programme dedicated to research & innovation and it is "open to the world". This means that researchers, universities, research organisations, companies and non-governmental organisations from across the globe can apply to participate in the activities of the Work Programme carried out mainly through calls for proposals.

EURAXESS ASEAN interviewed a member of the network of National Contact Points for tips and advice how researchers in ASEAN can become part of Horizon 2020-funded research consortia.

Iceland is just one of the 39 European countries that are part of the EURAXESS network. Turn to page 16 to find out about the research opportunities in this Nordic island nation.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter and welcome your feedback.

Your EURAXESS ASEAN team
EURAXESS ASEAN Newsletter is a quarterly electronic newsletter, edited by EURAXESS ASEAN, which provides information of specific interest to European researchers in ASEAN and international researchers who are interested in the European research landscape and conducting research in Europe or with European partners.

The information contained in this publication is intended for personal use only. It should not be taken in any way to reflect the views of the European Commission nor of the Delegations of the European Union.

Please email to asean@euraxess.net for any comments on this newsletter, contributions you would like to make, if you think any other colleagues would be interested in receiving this newsletter, or if you wish to unsubscribe.

Editors: Dr Susanne RENTZOW-VASU and Simon GRIMLEY, EURAXESS ASEAN, Regional Representatives

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1. The Three O’s – An Open EU Policy for Science, Technology and Innovation

The advent of digital technologies is making science and innovation more open, collaborative and global. In this context, Open Innovation, Open Science and Open to the World have been set as the three strategic priorities of the European Union’s research and innovation policy.

"Open Science" refers to the possibilities and implications of digital/web-based technologies in research with the aim of transforming the entire research process to make it more open, replicable and re-usable.

"Open Innovation" refers to a specific, strategic opening of innovation processes: knowledge producers, funding bodies and (potential) users.
work together crossing boundaries of organisations, sectors or disciplines to develop new products and services.

"Open to the World" refers to creating opportunities for research cooperation between Europe and other research areas worldwide.

In February 2018, EURAXESS ASEAN and Thailand’s National Science Technology Innovation Policy Office (STI co-organised a special talk on the Three O’s policy by Dr Kostas Glinos from the European Commission’s Directorate General for Research and Innovation. The slides of Dr Glinos’ talk can be downloaded here.
2 Horizon 2020: Open to the world

Research and innovation is at the centre of the Europe 2020 strategy aiming at developing a smart, sustainable and inclusive European society by 2020. The main instrument for Research and Innovation in Europe is Horizon 2020, the current Framework Programme for Research and Innovation spanning 7 years and with a budget of almost 80 billion Euros. Horizon 2020 is designed to address societal challenges – most of which are of global nature – through funding excellent science, technology and innovation. Implemented via multi-annual work programmes, the current work programme 2018-2020 has a budget of over 30 billion Euros. It offers an array of opportunities for ASEAN-based researchers to join collaborative research projects with European partners. As a testimony of the importance for international collaboration to find sustainable solutions to global challenges, Horizon 2020 is fully open to all ASEAN-based researchers and innovators, from the private and the public sector.

Earlier this year, EURAXESS ASEAN supported the organisation of the Horizon 2020 Information Days 2018, a series of information & training sessions focusing on collaborative research opportunities available to researchers in ASEAN through Horizon 2020.

These Information Days took place in in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia from 26 January to 1 February. The Singapore-leg was supported by the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) with a welcome address by Ms Ang Ee Luang, Deputy Executive Director, A*STAR Graduate Academy. 85 researchers from Singapore’s universities and research institutes received detailed information on the opportunities for research collaboration with European partners that are available under the programme’s current work programme 2018-2020.

The Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia kindly provided support for the Horizon 2020 Information Days in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with participation of over 140 researchers from across the country.
Two National Contact Points (NCPs), Mr Dalibor Drljaca and Dr (Ms) Corina Abraham-Barna, provided detailed training on how to benefit from the funding and collaboration opportunities offered by Horizon 2020. EURAXESS ASEAN chaired a roundtable with Malaysian researchers currently participating in H2020-funded research consortia who encouraged their peers to use the opportunity to join hands with the research community in Europe.

More than 140 researchers from across Indonesia joined the last leg of the Horizon 2020 Info Days in Jakarta. Participants travelled from as far away as Aceh, Papua, and Kalimantan for detailed training by the two European experts. Prof Dr Ocky Karna Radjasa, Director of Research and Community Services, RISTEKDIKTI delivered a keynote address to the participants. In a roundtable chaired by EURAXESS ASEAN, Indonesian researchers with prior Horizon 2020 and FP7 shared their opinions on the benefits of participation and offered tips on how to be successful in applying for Horizon 2020 funding.

Please download the Horizon 2020 Info Days presentations here which provide detailed information on calls of particular relevance to researchers in ASEAN as well offering expert advice on proposal preparation.

EURAXESS ASEAN will be organising 2-day events in Singapore and Bangkok the week of 22 May to showcase European funding and fellowship opportunities available to researchers in the region. These events will include a one-day training session how to be successful in preparing a proposal for these programmes. Details will be announced shortly on the EURAXESS ASEA portal and on our Facebook page.
3 Participating in Horizon 2020 research consortia: How to find European partners

International cooperation is crucial to address many of the objectives addressed in H2020. As such, the programme is fully open to all ASEAN-based researchers and innovators, from the private and the public sector. Most H2020 funding is allocated to collaborative research projects carried out by consortia of research organisations working together on specific research areas. EURAXESS ASEAN met with Dr Corina Georgeta Abraham-Barna, an expert in the field of European and international research collaboration, for her advice to ASEAN-based researchers on getting involved on collaborative research projects funded by Horizon 2020.

Corina, how can a lab or a research group in Southeast Asia become involved in an H2020 research consortium?

The best way to build a project consortium is to use one’s professional and personal connections, and subsequently to develop the network, based on the specific roles to be played in the project by all partners. As researchers, we are constantly collaborating with peers from other countries. This group of people should be the first network to be mobilised when looking for collaborators to join or form an H2020 consortium. However, researchers should also reach out beyond their personal connections to those colleagues whose work they draw on and with whom they share common research interests. Researchers in Asia should not hesitate to get in direct contact with their Europe contacts, asking them if they are interested to be involved in a specific call for proposals.

On the other hand, structuring a good consortium also means adhering to the principles of complementarity and interdisciplinarity, as every institution needs to fulfil specific tasks in the project. Building a consortium for a project is like reconstructing a jigsaw, where the pieces are not the same, but they need to fit together in a way that ensures all work packages and tasks described in the call details are covered. So, we need to involve not only colleagues from our field, but also complementary research teams.

In the frame of the Horizon 2020 programme (H2020), it is a compulsory requirement that collaborative research projects involve at least 3 participants from 3 different EU Member States or Associated Countries.
Once this basic requirement has been fulfilled, additional partners from non-European countries – for example, research players based in the countries of Southeast Asia – can join the consortium. Be sure to check the eligibility for funding of your country in Annex A of the Work Programme.

Which attributes should a good research partner have?

Since the three evaluation and award criteria of Horizon 2020 proposals are excellence, impact as well as quality and efficiency of the implementation, high levels of scientific expertise and experience of the core partners are essential, and their excellence must be described in the proposal.

When choosing partners for a research consortium it is important to first get a clear understanding of the project goals. As a second step it is essential to carefully define the activities which are necessary to accomplish these goals and to group them into so-called work packages, for example management, experimental activities, dissemination etc. The work packages can then be divided into different tasks with specific activities and assigned to the different partners of the consortium. It goes without saying that the partners should be chosen based on their ability to accomplish the tasks set out in the project.

Research actors from academia and industry, including SMEs, but also NGOs can be partners of a research consortium. Most importantly, all partners need to be reliable and committed to the project and their obligations. Each partner should bring to the project excellent skills in a particular scientific field. While it is not obligatory, an ideal consortium partner already has previous experience in EU projects or international research cooperation. The partners within your research consortium should be well balanced in terms of geographical spread, expertise and type of organisation (Academia, Research centres, Industry, SMEs etc.). A fully integrated and balanced team should have a critical mass of research staff, a clearly described complementarity of the different partners, with a clear designation of roles and functions that rules out overlap or duplication. With regards to ensuring the societal impact of the research project being carried out, the consortium should carefully consider involving SMEs, consumer organisation, or associations etc.

When deliberating whether to choose partners from existing contacts or to approach new ones it is important to assess the following pros and cons. Existing contacts are likely most effective, most reliable and most predictable given a history of previous collaborations. However, past collaborators may at times be less suitable for a new project, especially when looking for complementary skills. New contacts may be a greater risk but may be a better option when looking for complementary skill sets in the different partners.
How could researchers in Southeast Asia build up their research network? Can you share some tips?

The European Commission provides a large number of networking opportunities for research actors. The Participant Portal offers a partnering tool. Representatives of the European Commission, often in partnership with EURAXESS Worldwide, are frequently organising H2020 Info Days, project writing workshops and brokerage or match making events. Networking events are important for finding partners. Make sure to join your respective EURAXESS Worldwide network to stay updated on upcoming events and opportunities.

Researchers should make use of the scientific events they attend for networking purposes. Remember to be pragmatic and speak to colleagues at conferences and events; invite them to join a new project and communicate your interest to join their projects as well. When attending scientific events, do make sure to come prepared with a clear idea of your objectives. Preparing an ‘elevator pitch’ (a very short oral presentation) could be crucial in securing interest of potential new partners for your project. Make use of those discussions during the coffee break and always follow up with an email.

It is important to continue investing in the relationship with your research partners even after the project has been completed. Do make sure you remain visible as a reliable partner.

Are there any platforms or tools that researchers in Southeast Asia should consult to find European research partners?

The H2020 project management tool is the Participant Portal, which includes a Partner Finding Tool.

The Projects & Results Service CORDIS is another extremely useful database of institutions and/or research consortia that have successfully participated in previous projects funded by Horizon 2020 (or any of the previous funding programmes).

Moreover, a new tool for finding partners for concrete calls has recently been created. On every call page, potential applicants will now find a Call for Partner Search, where organisations are expressing their interest in collaborating with other researchers in this specific topic. Interested research actors can publish their partner requests for open and forthcoming topics after logging into the Participant Portal.

Please let me emphasise that individual researchers wishing to submit proposals to specific calls need to create a personal profile on the Participant Portal. Institutions intending to participate in projects are required to create a unique organisation profile to receive a PIC number - unique identifier for organisations. This is a 9-digit number.
which institutions will receive after registering the organisation in the Beneficiary Register. Please do check whether your organisation has already been registered by using the PIC search form. If this is the case, there is no need to register it again.

Please do also make use of the EURAXESS website which offers a [partner finding tool](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess).

**What would be your advice to junior researchers looking for a supervisor in Europe to host their MSCA fellowship?**

The EURAXESS Portal is an important tool for institutions and researchers who are looking for collaborators. Registration is free of charge and allows access to a growing global network of mobile researchers. European institutions are posting their offers to host an MSCA fellow on the EURAXESS Portal.

The network of the National Contact Points for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA NCPs) are also offering support in finding a European host and partner. You can find ‘Expressions of Interest’ (EOI) for researchers who are looking for a partner institution for MSCA projects, or for host institution for MSCA fellowships or MSCA fellowship positions [published on their website](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess).

**Which would be the steps for being involved in a H2020 research project?**

The first step is to search the H2020 Participant Portal for a suitable call for proposals.

Once you have selected a call make sure to carefully study the call description, terms of reference and all related documents. Do make use of the H2020 Online Manual, a detailed guide on the formal procedures starting from proposal submission to grant management.

After identifying a suitable call for proposals, the second step is to find project partners or to apply as an individual. Make use of the different [partner search services](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess) in finding partner organisations.

The third step is to [create an individual account on the Participant Portal](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess).

The fourth step is to register your organisation. Start by checking first on the [Organisation Register page](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess) if your organisation is already registered. Only if you do not find your organisation there, you should start its registration by clicking on the Register Organisation button.
Step Five is to submit your project proposal to the European Commission. To submit your project proposal, you need to go to the section Electronic Proposal Submission on a specific Topic page that belongs to a call. You need to be logged in with your Participant Portal account to start filling in standard forms and to submit your proposal.

If you are invited by the coordinator to join a project proposal, you need to create a personal profile, and to send to the coordinator the email address used for your Participant Portal profile and the PIC number of your institution.

Are there other opportunities for researchers in Southeast Asia to develop their competencies in European projects?

As individuals, a researcher can join the database of independent experts. The European Commission frequently appoints independent experts to assist with assignments that include the evaluation of proposals, the monitoring of projects, the evaluation of programmes, and the design of policy. The opportunity to become an expert is open to any researcher with a high level of expertise in his or her relevant fields and with the flexibility to be involved in occasional, short-term assignments. Participation in the evaluation process will be financially compensated and is usually done online; at times there may be a meeting held in Brussels, Belgium.

Corina, thank you very much for your advice!
4 ASEAN researchers share their advice on getting involved in Horizon 2020-funded research consortia

Prof. Yenny Risjani, Director of the Central Laboratory of Life Science at Brawijaya University (LSIH), Indonesia

Project: MSCA-RISE „The Genus Haslea, New marine resources for blue biotechnology and Aquaculture“

How did you become involved in the European research consortium?

“I became involved in a research collaboration with my European partners because of our friendship with the coordinator from Le Mans University (JL Mouget) who we had been collaborating with in other research projects.”

Why did the European partners invite you to join the consortium? What did you do to build up your international visibility?

“I am a marine biologist working in the same field as the coordinator of the research consortium. I am also the Director of the Central Laboratory of Life Science at Brawijaya University (LSIH). Our laboratory is equipped with important instruments that are needed to carry out the biological research. My scientific expertise and the reputation of our lab were important in building a scientific collaboration.”

What is your advice to your research peers - how can they become involved in a European research consortium?

“Build a strong relationship with your European partners, be an active communicator and work hard to formulate a good proposal.”
Please briefly describe how you became involved in a research collaboration with your European partners?

“We were approached by the European partner and we responded accordingly. They specifically stated the purpose and what is expected from the partnership in the research collaboration, and we noted that they are looking for partnership not only based on expertise in specific field (in our case, in computer graphics) but also based on our geographical region and access to specific data required for the proposed research.”

How do you think the European side became aware of you? What did you do to build up your international visibility?

“We believe the European partner noted us due to visibility in many ways. The first thing that people search may be players in a area of research that they were looking for and they were directed to our research group or the organization website – we highlighted our specialization in research, what our team is currently doing and also our research and publication tracks. Apart from the formal research group website, we believe our group’s activities may also contribute to international visibility. These activities span from sharing what we do (and our research output) through indexed publication, online databases, open-access libraries, engagement in talks, seminars, workshops and conferences, establishing new links and interactions via multiple online platforms and media (both built for research as well as for social means).”

Based on your experience what is your advice to your research peers - how should they proceed in becoming involved in a European research consortium?

“Our advice to other researchers who have interest in becoming involved in a European research consortium is that once you find suitable research partners AND you know you can contribute and make full commitment, act and respond accordingly. The partners appreciate potential partners who can be an active team member at the stage of proposal preparation, right after the research fund is granted and throughout the duration of the research. This means taking part in the preparation of the proposal, providing necessary documents needed and getting involved in the research activities.”
How did CyberSecurity Malaysia become involved in a research collaboration with your European partners?

“CyberSecurity Malaysia has been involved in CONNECT2SEA in 2016 as an ASEAN partner. During this period, we have contributed well to the project. In 2017, the Consortium agreed to continue collaboration with ASEAN partners for another project and CyberSecurity Malaysia was identified as one of the partners.”

How has CyberSecurity Malaysia built up its international visibility?

“Malaysia is ranked third among 193 countries in terms of its commitment to cyber security, according to the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2017 report published by the ITU. The GCI is a survey that measures the commitment of ITU member states to cyber security. It assesses a country based on five pillars; legal, technical, organisational, capacity building, and cooperation. This ranking has put Malaysia on the world map as one of the top countries that gives her commitment in cyber security. To build up their international visibility, countries and research institutions need to build up their expertise in these five areas; technical, organisational, capacity building, and cooperation.”

Based on your experience what is your advice to your research peers – how should they proceed in becoming involved in a European research consortium?

“Make themselves noticeable by improving their presence and expertise at international fora, so that people will notice their potential.”

Dr. Zahri Yunos
Chief Operating Officer
CyberSecurity Malaysia
An Agency Under the Ministry of Science, Technology & Innovation (MOSTI)
Project: “YAKSHA – Cybersecurity awareness and knowledge systemic high-level application”
Located in the North-Atlantic ocean close by the Arctic Circle, Iceland is very much a bridge between continents. It takes approximately five hours to fly from New York to Reykjavik, and three hours from London.

Iceland is a progressive, modern society that continuously ranks at the top of measurements for quality of life, such as the United Nations Human Development Index. Its economy is one of the most productive economies in the world, per-capita, and it is annually considered to be one of greenest countries on the planet, due in large parts to its vast renewable energy resources.

The Icelandic system of research and development is a multilevel system with a dispersed decision-making structure. It has a number of fully-fledged research institutions, essential funds and a strong force of well-trained scientists, and covers all major fields in science and technology. Icelandic scientists face a challenging task of maintaining the quality and range of research activities. Concentration of research in key areas is important in order to optimize resources.

**Icelandic S&T Policy and Strategy**

The Science and Technology Policy Council is responsible for setting public policy in matters of science and technology in Iceland. Its role is to support scientific research, science education and technological development in Iceland so as to strengthen the foundations of the Icelandic culture and increase the competitiveness of the economy. The Science and Technology Policy Council operates pursuant to Act No 2/2003. The Council is chaired by the Prime Minister.
and its members include the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture, the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Innovation as well as 16 representatives nominated by different ministries and higher education institutions and by the social partners. In addition, the chair may appoint up to four other ministers to the Council. The Council sets the official science and technology policy for a three-year period.

The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) supports research, research studies, technical development and innovation in Iceland. RANNIS operates under the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and cooperates closely with the Icelandic Science and Technology Policy Council providing professional assistance regarding the preparation and implementation of science and technology policy in Iceland. RANNIS administers competitive funds and strategic research programmes, coordinates and promotes Icelandic participation in collaborative international projects in science and technology and promotes public awareness of research and innovation in Iceland.

### New Technologies in Aquaculture

**Le Hoang Bao Chau (Vietnam)**

Le Hoang Bao Chau is an aquaculture professional from Vietnam that studied as a fellow at the United National Fisheries Training Programme in Iceland in 2014. During her fellowship in Iceland she worked on developing a special feed for fish larvae that improve their survival rate with the aim of bringing the new technology back to her home in Vietnam. The training programme helps professionals like Le Hoang to find solutions based on Icelandic aquaculture know-how and gives them unique access to advanced research facilities and expert knowledge of academic institutions and private companies in Iceland (source).

### Funding

**THE ICELANDIC RESEARCH FUND (IRF)** is an open competitive research fund that supports scholarly research and postgraduate research education in Iceland. To this end, the IRF supports clearly defined research projects of individuals, research groups, universities, research institutes and private enterprises. IRF shall award grants in accordance with the general emphases of the Science and Technology Policy Council and based on an expert assessment of the quality of research projects, the capability of the individuals carrying out the proposed research and their ability to devote time and effort to the project.

The **Technology Development Fund** is a public, competitive fund that supports innovation and technology development projects. The role of the fund is to
support research and development activities, which aim towards innovation in Icelandic industry and increased competitiveness of the Icelandic economy. The fund supports projects along the R&D&I value chain from applied research projects, development of start-up companies, to the first steps into marketing. The fund operates according to the policy of The Science and Technology Policy Council, which role is to promote scientific research and research training in the sciences and encourage technological progress in Iceland.

Icelandic Research and Innovation institutions

The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies was established in 2006 with the merger of several Icelandic institutes in the field. The institute is located in Reykjavik and has the role of preserving and studying medieval Icelandic manuscripts and disseminating knowledge to the scientific community and public at large about its research in Icelandic studies, history, language and literature as well as preserve and augment the collections within its care.

Matis Ltd. is an Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D institute founded in 2007. For years, Matis has been considered a valuable partner in multiple, miscellaneous projects and has played a leading role in large international projects with some of the largest food and ingredient companies in the world. Matis employs around 100 staff in offices, laboratories or Food Innovation Centres located in cities or towns around Iceland. Matis’ turnover in 2014 was around $11.3 million USD, of which approximately 35% comes from international cooperation.

Iceland GeoSurvey is a self-financing, state-owned, non-profit institution established in 2003. It is based on seven decades of continuous experience in the field of geothermal and hydropower research and development. During this period Iceland GeoSurvey has provided consulting, training, and scientific services to the Icelandic power industry and the Icelandic government, and to numerous foreign companies and governments all over the world. Although the focus is on geothermal exploration, development, and utilization, Iceland GeoSurvey’s experience covers many other geoscience-related fields as well, including groundwater studies, marine geology, and environmental monitoring.

The Icelandic Meteorological Office IMO is a governmental institution under the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources. The research focus of IMO is on weather and climate, atmospheric processes, glacier and avalanche studies, hydrological systems, earthquake and volcanic

RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

University of Iceland
The University of Iceland is a research university and places great emphasis on quality in research. The university operates dozens of research institutions and centres.

Reykjavik University
Reykjavik University has a clear and progressive research strategy.

University of Akureyri
Research is one of the fundamental aspects of the University of Akureyri.

Bifrost University

The Agricultural University of Iceland

Iceland Academy of the Arts

Holar University College
processes and geohazards. IMO also focuses on research in multi-parameter geophysical monitoring to develop more accurate forecasts of hazardous events. IMO has participated in several European and Nordic funded research projects, having the role of lead partner in many of them.

**Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (MFRI)** is a government institute under the auspices of the Ministry of Industries and Innovation. The institute employs around 190 staff, operates 2 research vessels and 10 branches around the country, including an aquaculture experimental station. MFRI is leading in marine and freshwater research in Icelandic territories and the arctic, providing advice on sustainable use and protection of the environment. The main research priorities are research on marine and freshwater ecosystems, sustainable exploitation of main stocks, ecosystem approach to fisheries management, research on fishing technology and seafloor and habitat mapping. MFRI is highly regarded in the scientific community and is therefore a valuable research partner, active at an international level with a strong infrastructure and high quality equipment. MFRI is an appealing work place with progressive human resources policy to strengthen the institute’s competiveness and an effective gender equality policy.

**Study in Iceland**

Study in Iceland is a service housed within the Icelandic Center for Research. The new website, [http://study.iceland.is](http://study.iceland.is), was launched in 2017 brings together information and resources for international students interested at studying at one of Iceland’s seven universities. The website is run in collaboration with Íslandsstofa (Promote Iceland) and provides information on university education, Icelandic as a foreign language, summer schools, life in Iceland, and a practical guide for applicants and foreign students. Study in Iceland also provides advice and signposting to services through e-mail or phone for interested parties.

**OTHER RESEARCH INSTITUTES**

- Landspitali - University Hospital
- Icelandic Institute of Natural History
- Innovation Center Iceland
- National Energy Authority of Iceland
- Nordvulk - The Nordic Volcanological Centre
- The Science Institute - University of Iceland
- Institute for Experimental Pathology of the University of Iceland
- Iceland Forest Service
- National Land Survey of Iceland
Important information for incoming researchers: EURAXESS Iceland

The Icelandic Centre for Research is the coordinator of EURAXESS in Iceland and the EURAXESS Bridgehead organization. RANNIS coordinates and promotes Icelandic participation in international cooperation in science, education and culture and interacts with corresponding agencies and research councils in other countries and provides assistance to incoming researchers with advice on daily life and formalities of moving to Iceland. The EURAXESS network in Iceland is quite small as it consists of three members in the country: in addition to RANNIS the University of Iceland and the University of Reykjavik are established as EURAXESS contact points.
6 Women in Science

For scientists, packing up their lab coats and microscopes and heading to foreign laboratories can really pay dividends. Thanks to initiatives like Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowships, women are benefiting more and more from making a move abroad.

In 2018, more women researchers travelled than ever before, as reflected in the figures from the Marie Curie Fellowships. The fellowships have been in place for 20 years and have helped to promote a culture of mobility for early-stage career scientists throughout the EU and beyond.

In 2011, 37.9% of the fellowships went to women, and in 2016, this rose to 43%. But what do these female scientists think about the importance of spending part of their career abroad? EURAXESS ASEAN met with a young researcher from Indonesia to share her thoughts on importance of research mobility.

Meilani Wibowo is a fellow of the MSCA-Innovative Training Networks European Joint Doctorates Programme in Theoretical Chemistry and Computational Modelling. Her host universities are the University of Groningen (UniGro), in the Netherlands and the University of Pisa (UniPi) in Italy. Meilani is currently in the last year of her PhD project and based in Pisa. Her research project focuses on understanding the singlet fission mechanism employing the electronic structure calculations and excited state dynamics simulations. She has spent the first-half of her PhD project in the Netherlands where she started and developed her research project mainly based on the electronic structure methods. During this period, she also spent a short, three-months internship with SIMUNE, a company with expertise in atomistic simulations offering services for leading industrial, academic, and research customers working with materials. The company is based at the nanoGUNE facilities in Donostia – San Sebastián (Spain).

Says Meilani, “Personally, I found that every mobility I have experienced was interesting, exciting, and challenging at the same time.” She describes her first move from the Netherlands (UniGro) to Spain (SIMUNE) as “interesting because I experienced a completely different working environment moving from the university to a company, albeit I was still working on the same research project”. She adds, “Working in a company helped me learn how to collaborate with professionals who are experts in their fields as well as to improve my communication skill.”

Another exciting and, as she says, “probably the most challenging mobility experience” has been her return to a university environment following her stint in industry. Even though she moved back to the familiar university environment the geographical move from Spain to Italy was a challenge. “The opportunity to acquire a new methodology and new techniques to further develop my research project was really exciting but adjusting to a new place and culture is a challenge in itself”. Adds Meilani, “I have

Meilani Wibowo was born and raised in Surabaya, Indonesia. She is currently a PhD student at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands and the University of Pisa in Italy. She is a fellow of the MSCA-Innovative Training Networks European Joint Doctorates Programme in Theoretical Chemistry and Computational Modelling. Her research project is focused on theoretical study of the excited states of chromophores. She holds a Master of Science in the Theoretical Chemistry and Computational Modelling from the Universitat de València and Universidad de Autonoma de Madrid, Spain and a Master of Science from the Department of Chemical Engineering, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology.
realised that the mobility experience helps me to develop not only my scientific knowledge, research skills and professional experience but also, to develop my soft skills."

Weighing up the pros and cons of her mobility experience so far, Meilani supports the common notion that career advancement in scientific research requires mobility in order to gain the necessary international experience. A mobility experience, she explains, provides ample opportunity for career development be it through access to new knowledge or state-of-the art equipment but also the creation of an international network of potential research collaborators or employers. Nonetheless, she is aware that mobility may become less easy later in life once researchers have to juggle their work with commitments towards their spouse or their children. Says Meilani “I am glad that as an early-stage researcher I have done and experienced this mobility programme provided by MSCA. It has enriched my knowledge, skills and experiences.”

MSCA-IF Call 2018 will open on 12 April 2018

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships (MSCA-IF) aim at enhancing the creative and innovative potential of experienced researchers (post-docs) through advanced training and international and intersectoral mobility. The fellowships are awarded to the most promising researchers of any nationality who want to benefit from advanced training in Europe. Applicants either hold a PhD degree or have at least four years of full-time equivalent research experience. For details and application advice see here.

7 About us

EURAXESS ASEAN is a networking tool for European researchers active in Southeast Asia and for international researchers wishing to collaborate and/or pursue a career in Europe. EURAXESS ASEAN provides information about research in Europe, European research policy, opportunities for research funding, for EU-ASEAN and international collaboration and for trans-national mobility. Membership is free.

Visit us at asean.euraxess.org and Join the EURAXESS ASEAN community.
EURAXESS Worldwide has dedicated teams in ASEAN (focus on Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC, focus on Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, and Colombia), China, India, Japan and North America (US and Canada) ready to assist you. A new network will be launched in South Korea as of July 2018.