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D4.2 Criteria for financing European early career researcher and professional networking activities

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Abstract

In support for early career researchers and professionals in radiation protection (ECRP), various actions are initiated via the PIANOFORTE project. Complementing support for targeted training courses and initiatives in continuous professional development, dedicated support will go to networking activities between early career researchers and professionals. This document describes criteria to support the networking activities for ECRP, which can be organised during the PIANOFORTE project in order to facilitate contact and promote collaboration between Europe's future radiation protection researchers and professionals.

Content

1. Introduction.....	5
1.1. Aims of PIANOFORTE'S WP4	5
1.2. Objectives of Task 4.4.....	5
1.3. Purpose and scope of this deliverable	5
2. Setting up a European early career researcher and professional network.....	6
3. Eligibility criteria for financing European early career researcher and professional networking activities.....	7
4. Practical budget allocation via the PIANOFORTE project.....	8
5. Sustainable character of network for early career researchers and professionals	9
Annex I: proposal template for an ECRP networking event.....	10

1. Introduction

1.1. Aims of PIANOFORTE'S WP4

The ambitious research programmes called for by the different platforms in PIANOFORTE (ALLIANCE, EURADOS, EURAMED, MELODI, NERIS and SHARE) necessitate a programme to build up and maintain relevant knowledge, skills and competences.

WP4 of PIANOFORTE offers various mechanisms to support education and training for students and professionals, as well as networking opportunities. More specifically, financial support is provided for

- *training providers* for the organisation of targeted courses to promote knowledge, skills and competences of MSc/PhD students, early career researchers and professionals (PIANOFORTE Task 4.1);
- *individual MSc/PhD students and early career researchers* to participate in conferences and training courses (travel grants) (PIANOFORTE Task 4.2);
- *professionals* for their continuous professional development (CPD) in radiation protection matters (PIANOFORTE Task 4.3);
- the development of a sustainable network for early career scientists and professionals (PIANOFORTE Task 4.4).

1.2. Objectives of Task 4.4

Complementing the support for targeted training courses and initiatives in continuous professional development, dedicated support will go to networking activities bringing together early career researchers and professionals. The objective of this level of support is to facilitate contact and promote collaboration between Europe's future radiation protection researchers and professionals. The networking activities could also serve as a forum for exchange of experience and a source of information about advanced education & training and career possibilities in the field of radiation protection.

1.3. Purpose and scope of this deliverable

This document describes criteria to evaluate requests for financial support for networking activities for ECRP organised during the PIANOFORTE project. These activities are intended to facilitate the development and implementation of a European early career researchers and professionals network with a sustainable character.

2. Setting up a European early career researcher and professional network

Although the radiation research community is quite small within Europe, it is anchored in a variety of institutions in many states and spread over six areas that are represented by the platforms ALLIANCE, EURADOS, EURAMED, MELODI, NERIS, and SHARE. Despite the relative size and spread, the ambition in radiation research is large and necessitates a vast programme to build and maintain competences. The PIANOFORTE project already provides funding for the organisation of training courses and initiatives in continuous professional development, as well as mobility support to early career researchers and professionals, however, more actions are needed to add to the sustainability of the radiation researcher community, such as the setup of a network for European early career researchers and professionals. The benefits of participation in such a network would be e.g. to facilitate the interdisciplinary contact between researchers, to promote their own research achievements and to provide the early career researchers a clearer platform within the PIANOFORTE project and wider EU research community.

A network for early career researchers was started in 2013 on a *pro bono* initiative, but turned out not sustainable (EURAYS - EU Radiation research Association for Young Scientists in Radiation Protection). During the European Radiation Protection Week 2019 it was again discussed in a side meeting, combining about 50 individuals involved in the previous EURAYS network, participants of the CONCERT E&T WP7 and the initiators of a COST proposal. The proposal was deemed without chances for success and not pursued. Instead, a proposal text was formulated by the meeting participants for the foundation of (a renewed) EURAYS. The proposal at that time aimed to address the research platforms to commit a limited budget per year to support the activities of this association. The idea was to have a formal kick-off of this association during the ERPW in 2020. ERPW 2020 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The PIANOFORTE task 4.4 aims to facilitate the setup up and support the much needed network.

The setup of a European early career researcher and professional network could be based on elements of the proposal drafted earlier, taking into account examples from SWE-RAYS¹ and networking initiatives from research platforms and other related associations (e.g. IRPA-YGN). SWE-RAYS is an example of a successful initiative, which has now been running successfully for 10 years. Important factors which contributed to their functioning are a sustainable formal structure (a Board with rules of succession), annual meetings where the members can meet in person, and structural funding from established structures related to radiation research (in this case the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority and the Stockholm University-based Centre for Radiation Protection Research).

Limited funding is available via the PIANOFORTE project to fund networking activities. It is recommended that early career researchers carry the initiative (bottom-up approach),

¹ Swedish Radiation Research Association for Young Scientists - <https://www.swerays.se/>

supported by senior researchers from various disciplines and related research platforms. The organisation of regular meetings is recommended, at least on a yearly basis, but also intermediate initiatives would contribute towards the sustainability of such a network.

The target group can also benefit from the initiatives of other EU funded projects (such as the ENEN# project², since it includes dedicated actions to attract new talents, enhance nuclear-related competencies and develop sustainable education and training (including VET) training programs).

3. Eligibility criteria for financing European early career researcher and professional networking activities

The criteria for supporting selected training courses, CPD initiatives and mobility are described in PIANOFORTE D4.1)³. The criteria below only describe networking activities in the form of physical meetings.

Activities of the network should facilitate interactions with peers and accelerate exchange of experiences and knowledge. Activities can take various formats, such as (non-exhaustive list):

- meet-the-expert to discuss and exchange experiences on how to approach research projects;
- topical 'knowledge' meetings to address certain topics via discussion of latest publications, topical reviews or even introductory presentations for newcomers in the discipline;
- topical 'skills' meetings around knowledge management, data management, science communication, scientific writing, ...;
- interdisciplinary 'dating' between researchers from various domains;
- technical group excursions to research installations which can be used for interdisciplinary research;
- career days inviting national and international players in radiation science and technology, including also options for postgraduate education and vocational training.

The requested budget for networking activities is to be estimated and communicated beforehand towards the PIANOFORTE WP4, and can include the rent of facilities, consumables (e.g., catering) and technical support (for hybrid/online participation) whenever needed.

Proposals can be made by any ERCP individual affiliated to a PIANOFORTE partner, but are preferably submitted by a group of individuals and combining different (research) disciplines in radiation protection. An early career researcher or professional is considered to have

² Building European Nuclear Competence through continuous Advanced and Structured Education and Training Actions (ENEN2plus) - <https://enen.eu/index.php/portfolio/enen2plus-project/>

³ PIANOFORTE D4.1 - Rules and guidelines for the support of: 1) courses, 2) the mobility programme for PhD students and early career researchers, 3) CPD for RP professionals

maximum 7 years of working experience after gaining a PhD or starting a career in radiation protection.

Initiatives for networking meetings can be organised on a regular level (at least yearly), preferably adjacent to European scientific meetings (such as the European Radiation Protection Week or other interdisciplinary conferences) to optimise travel costs, addressing a broad target audience of early career researchers and professionals, aiming at mono-, inter- and transdisciplinary networking in radiation protection.

Although physical networking activities have a major potential in terms of building strong contacts between individuals, it should be noted that the inclusion of online attendance would limit the carbon footprint and increase the attendance of a wider audience. Therefore, including hybrid options to the organization of the meeting is recommended and can be taken into account in the costs. Complementary, actions such as minimizing printing of paper material should also be considered (Considering the European Green Deal).

4. Practical budget allocation via the PIANOFORTE project

Proposals for networking meetings should be addressed to pianoet.mbw@su.se, at least 2 months prior to the event. Annex I lists the necessary information to be provided in the request for supporting an ECRP networking event.

Proposals will be assessed by members of PIANOFORTE WP4 based on:

- the networking potential (addressed target audience, communication efforts, preliminary programme)
- the link with other networking initiatives, since the target is to establish only one network
- the practicality of the event arrangements
- the international character of the event (ECRP from at least 3 EU countries must be members of the organising committee)

After positive assessment of the proposal, the confirmation will be sent via email 1 month after the submission at the latest, with the PIANOFORTE coordinator in cc. The PIANOFORTE WP1 will arrange the practical payment towards the organising committee.

If different proposals are received to organise multiple networking activities within a short timeframe, PIANOFORTE WP4 will exchange contact details to facilitate a combined event whenever possible.

Since a budget of € 20 000 is reserved to fund meetings of a European early career researcher and professional network, it is proposed that the funding is spread throughout the duration

of the PIANOFORTE project, with a maximum of € 4000 per meeting. It is proposed that a maximum of €5000 can be granted per year, but exceptions will be allowed if well justified. These proposals can be revised during the PIANOFORTE project in function of the proposed networking initiatives, since the target is to establish a sustainable network for European early career researchers and professionals.

It is expected that the organisers of the meeting send a debrief about the networking activity to pianoet.mbw@su.se with a description of the number of attendees, the final programme, and general findings of the meeting. This debrief is expected three weeks after the activity at the latest and will be used by PIANOFORTE for communication and dissemination purposes.

5. Sustainable character of network for early career researchers and professionals

With the help of the funding from the PIANOFORTE project, networking activities can be funded until May 2027.

In order to grow further towards one sustainable initiative, a structural approach is needed with respect to governance, communication, periodic meetings and funding of activities. Via PIANOFORTE WP4, task 4.4, possibilities will be explored to initiate such an approach.

It is in the interest of both the radiation research community and the professional framework in radiation protection to have a continuous influx of competent and well-motivated young scientists and professionals, in order to continue the ambitious research programme as well as to guarantee the safe use of ionising radiation.

Annex I: proposal template for an ECRP networking event

Event title:

Event description (including an explanation on how this event promotes networking between ECRPs):

.....
.....
.....

Organisers:

Organiser contact name:

Organiser email:

Event date and timing:

Event location:

Event format (e.g. physical meeting):

Event programme, if available (e.g. agenda of the meeting):

Target audience:

Proposed communication channels:

Budget proposal (please provide ample detail of the estimated costs):

- Facilities:

- Consumables (incl. catering):

- Technical support:

- Other:

Total sum of requested support:

Bank account number of the organizer (IBAN):

Will this event include online participation (i.e. hybrid options)? Yes No

Is this event organised adjacent to another European scientific event? (if yes, please describe)

.....

How does this event relate to other networking initiatives in radiation protection research?

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