

EURAXESS Japan Quarterly Newsletter Issue 11 Q3 2018



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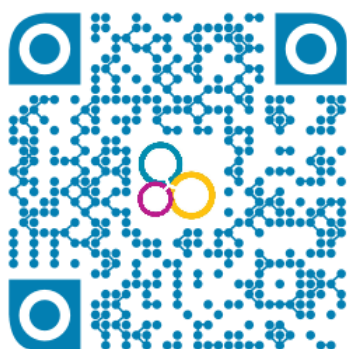
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EURAXESS Members in Focus: Norway

Research is of decisive importance when it comes to ensuring that Norway is a knowledge-based and innovative society, well positioned for changes.

Norway's primary objectives

The Government has set out three primary objectives in the long-term plan for research and higher education.

- To strengthen competitiveness and innovation capacity.
- To solve major challenges to society.
- To develop high-quality research groups. ¹

The Norwegian government aims to strengthen its investment in research and development. Key goals for research policy is to support ground-breaking and high quality research, to develop world-leading research capabilities, to foster innovation in industry, and to stimulate increased investments in research and development in businesses.

Research is international in nature, and international flows of knowledge have always been the norm in science. The Government is committed to increasing the internationalisation of Norwegian research, both for strengthening Norwegian competitiveness and for gaining access to a large international knowledge base. To further enhance the quality of Norwegian research, international cooperation must become an integral part of the average workday of more Norwegian researchers.

Norway aims to occupy a strong position internationally in terms of new technology, skills and knowledge. In several areas Norway can offer unique competence and research opportunities. Our strengths are largely related to the country's geography, economic specialisation patterns and institutional characteristics: a challenging topography has impelled leading research within fields such as oceanography, satellite communication and polar research.

Six priority areas

The exploitation of natural resources has had a profound impact on our innovation and research profile. Hence Norway has strong research traditions within marine and maritime research, petroleum research and energy research

¹ <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/research/innsiktsartikler/langtidsplan-for-forsking-og-hogare-utdanning/id2353317/>



in general. More recently, special priority is given to research related to renewable energy, and carbon capture and storage.²

Specifically, the Government's long-term plan states that it will increase allocations to research and development activity (R&D) in six long-term priority areas:

- the oceans;
- climate change, the environment and environment-friendly energy;
- public sector renewal and higher quality, more efficient welfare, health and care services;
- enabling technologies;
- an innovative, adaptable private sector;
- world-class research groups.

Knowledge and expertise are critical factors in economic competitiveness, especially for Norway given its high cost of living. Public investment is vital in this context, both in terms of allocating public funding to e.g. universities and university colleges and in terms of encouraging private investment in research and development activities or competency measures.

Without major investments in knowledge, it will not be possible to effectively address the major challenges society is facing, such as those related to security and preparedness, disease and epidemics, and reliable access to energy, water and food. These problems are for the most part global as well, and require international cooperation both through research and through other measures.

Research and higher education of uniformly high quality are critical for achieving the knowledge policy objectives. High quality is necessary to be able to develop and utilise knowledge. At the same time, it is the most cutting-edge research that advances the knowledge front the most and that results in the truly significant breakthroughs.³

The Research Council of Norway

The Research Council is the key advisor on research policy issues to the government authorities and distributes in excess of NOK 9 billion to research and innovation activities each year. The Research Council's sphere of action encompasses all subjects and disciplines, all thematic areas and all aspects of society, from basic research to research-based innovation and commercialisation. The Research Council seeks to strengthen the international position of Norwegian research together with other actors in the research system and serves in the role of change agent in these matters. The funding schemes for R&D projects can be divided into four main groups:

²

<https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/12490ae3fbf746eaaad2c6b2abd78a14f/brochure-research-in-norway-2013.pdf>

³ <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/research/innsiktsartikler/langtidsplan-for-forsking-og-hogare-utdanning/id2353317/>

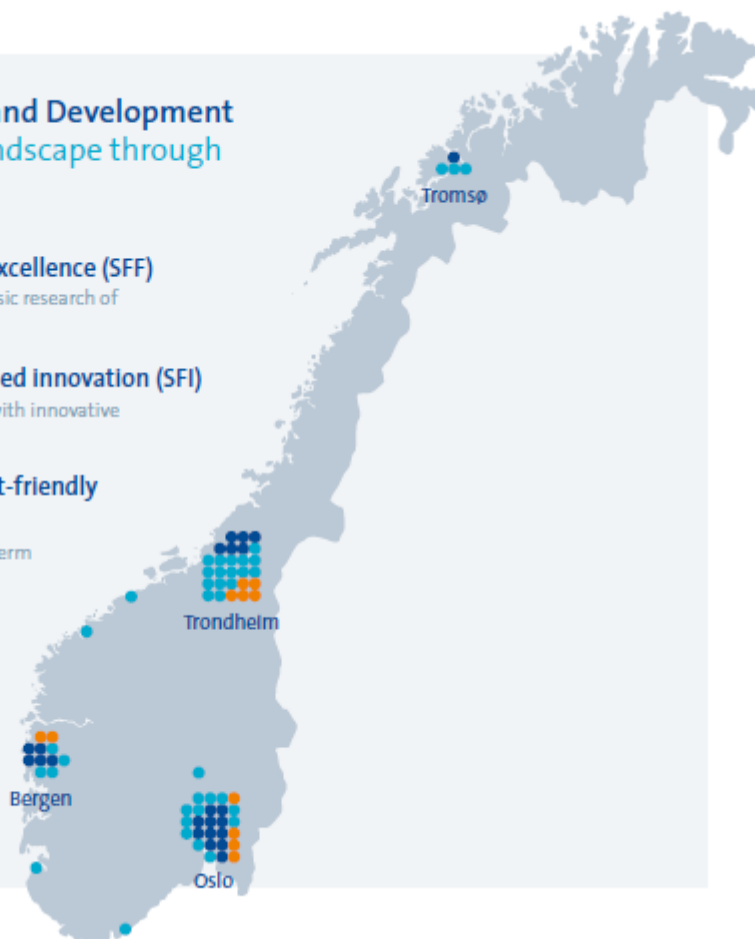


- **Research programmes** - strategic, targeted and coordinated research initiatives designed to bring forth new knowledge or expertise about a designated thematic area and promote innovation and commercialisation within a designated field.
- **Independent projects** - key funding instrument for independent, researcher-initiated basic research that is not associated with any specific research programme or infrastructure measure.
- **Networking measures** - strategic initiatives to establish ties between participants in the innovation system, introduction of measures to promote national activities and meeting places, as well as international networking measures.
- **Infrastructural and institutional measures** - basic funding to research institutes and other R&D groups, funding to Centres of Excellence and Centres for Research-based Innovation, and funding for scientific equipment, databases/collections.

Centre of excellence schemes (SFF,SFI,FME,NCE)

Centres for Research and Development Changing the R&D landscape through centres of excellence

- **Norwegian Centres of Excellence (SFF)**
are dedicated to long-term basic research of high international calibre.
- **Centres of Research-based Innovation (SFI)**
are working in close alliance with innovative enterprises.
- **Centres for Environment-friendly Energy Research (FME)**
are conducting focused long-term research of high international calibre in order to solve specific challenges.



The Research Council administers several funding schemes for the establishment and operation of specially designated centres of research. Specifically, these schemes comprise the Centres of Excellence (SFF) scheme, the Centres for Research-based Innovation (SFI) scheme, and the Centres for Environment-friendly Energy Research (FME) scheme.

The Centres of Excellence scheme (SFF) was launched to enable research communities to establish centres dedicated to long-term, basic research of a high international calibre, aimed at enhancing the quality of research in Norway.

The Centres for Research-based Innovation scheme (SFI) aims to establish or strengthen Norwegian research groups working in close alliances with innovative enterprises. The SFI scheme promotes long-term research that fosters innovation and enhances industrial competitiveness.

The Centres for Environment-friendly Energy Research scheme (FME) has been established to finance time-limited centres which conduct concentrated,



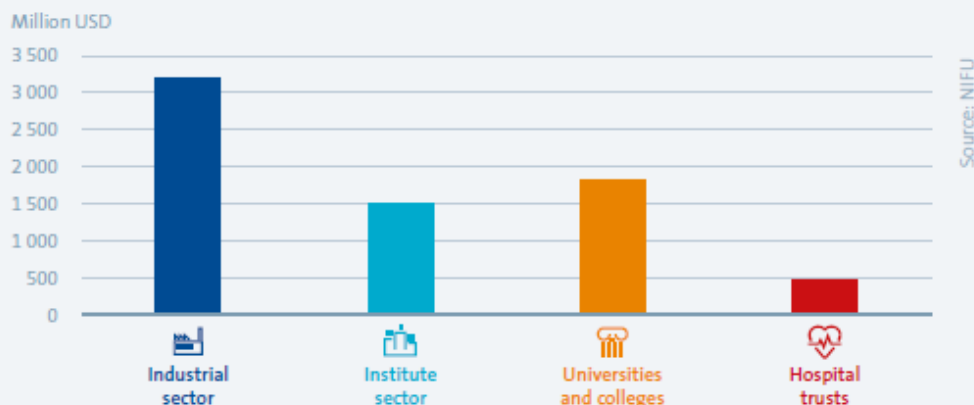
focused and long-term research of high international calibre in order to solve specific challenges in this field.⁴

Norway's research institute sector

Research institutes comprise a key component of the Norwegian research and innovation system, and contribute widely to the achievement of national research policy objectives. Measured by number of institutes, the Norwegian institute sector is large compared to many other countries, as well as highly diversified. The scientific focus, tasks, users, organisation, financing and historical background of the research institutes vary widely. The Research Council of Norway has responsibility for the strategic planning in the institute sector. The overall objective of the research institutes is to deliver high-quality, applied research results of relevance to trade and industry, the public administration and society at large in the market for commissioned research. The institute sector is also responsible for knowledge development in national priority areas and for fostering innovation, particularly with a view to linking basic and applied research. The state provides [basic funding](#) to 48 research institutes each year under the public funding scheme administered by the Research Council. These institutes are classified into four categories:

- [Technical-industrial institutes](#)
- [Primary industry institutes](#)
- [Social science institutes](#)
- [Environmental institutes](#)

R&D expenditure by type of institution in 2015



sectoral policy.⁵

According to figures from the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU), the institute sector carried out research and development (R&D) activity totalling NOK 10.3 billion in 2009. This is 24 per cent of all R&D activity carried out in Norway. Nearly one-half of the funding allocated by the Research Council and one-third of overall public R&D funding is allocated to research institutes. Thus, an efficient, well-functioning institute sector is essential for achieving research policy objectives, and plays a crucial role in certain areas of

⁴ https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/Home_page/1177315753906

⁵ https://www.forskningsradet.no/en/About_the_institute_sector/1254010731859



Norway's innovative business sector

In an economic climate marked by a decline in national revenues, new requirements for productivity and fast-paced technological development, the business sector in Norway is under restructuring. Globally, the world is facing pressing climate and environmental problems as well as resource scarcity, demographic changes and increasing migration. Digitalisation, technology as a driver of change and the green transition entail both opportunities and challenges for society, for companies and for individuals. Interest in research-based innovation is on the rise in the business and public sectors, political circles and the research system.

The business sector has the largest expenditures for R&D in Norway, providing approximately 47 percent of total R&D expenditures (2015). Norway has a small, open economy exposed to international competition, with various large, R&D-performing, export companies in the marine, energy, process, manufacturing and bio-based industries, among others. There is, however, substantial value creation and employment in industries with weak R&D traditions, and due to the industrial structure in Norway, the business sector conducts less research than in comparable countries.

If more Norwegian companies are to compete more successfully internationally, they must make greater use of research-based knowledge, invest more in R&D and actively apply research-based innovation to fully realise the potential for value creation to be found in addressing societal challenges, in Norwegian natural resources and in new technology.

The Norwegian authorities have the long-term perspective, resources and willingness to take risks needed to move Norway towards a new future by investing in education, basic research and research-based innovation in the business sector. The Research Council is a key actor in this effort, and its activities include allocating funding, providing advice and facilitating cooperation. The Research Council's strategy for an innovative business sector has its basis in the main strategy, Research for Innovation and Sustainability, and is intended to increase the share of research investments and international research cooperation leading to value creation and jobs in Norway. The strategy presents a set of measures designed to help to achieve the Research Council's objectives with regard to:

- Serving as an attractive innovation partner for the business sector;
- Enhancing the societal impact of investments in research;
- Encouraging more companies to use research in innovation activities;
- Supporting companies in taking greater advantage of the opportunities to be found in addressing societal challenges;
- Encouraging the business sector to boost research investments;
- Contributing to the progress of research and education institutions as strong innovation actors.⁶

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<https://www.forskningsradet.no/servlet/Satellite?pagename=Forskningsradet+Norsk%2FHovedsidemal&cid=1212565796096&c=InnholdsKontainer&p=1220788264903&querystring=03575-1&sortby=title&sortorder=asc&hits=30&configuration=nfrcpspublikasjonsppubli shed&publicationType=ALLE>



Hot topic: Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions RISE programme 2018 results and success stories from Japan

The RISE scheme promotes international and cross-sector collaboration through exchanging research and innovation staff, and sharing knowledge and ideas from research to market (and vice-versa).

The scheme fosters a shared culture of research and innovation that welcomes and rewards creativity and entrepreneurship and helps to turn creative ideas into innovative products, services or processes.

The deadline to the 2019 call is 2 April 2019 (further call information [here](#))

MSCA RISE programme objectives and scope

RISE involves organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors (in particular SMEs), based in Europe (EU Member States and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries) and outside Europe (third countries).

Support is provided for the development of partnerships in the form of a joint research and innovation project. This is aimed at knowledge sharing via international as well as intersectoral mobility, based on secondments of research and innovation staff (exchanges) with an in-built return mechanism.

The organisations constituting the partnership contribute directly to the implementation of a joint research and innovation project by seconding and/or hosting eligible staff members. Secondments shall always take place between legal entities independent from each other.

RISE proposals can focus either on one dimension of mobility (intersectoral / international), or include a combination of both. Exchanges can be for both early-stage and experienced researchers and can also include administrative, managerial and technical staff directly involved in the research and innovation activities of the proposal.

Support for the exchanges between institutions within Europe (EU Member States and Horizon 2020 Associated Countries) covers only intersectoral secondments, but exchanges with institutions from and to third countries can be intersectoral as well as within the same sector (secondments between institutions established in third countries or within the same EU Member State or Horizon 2020 Associated Country cannot not be supported).

Expected Impact

At staff member level:

- Increased set of skills, both research-related and transferable ones, leading to improved employability and career prospects both in and outside academia
- Increase in higher impact R&I output, more knowledge and ideas converted into products and services
- Greater contribution to the knowledge-based economy and society

At organisation level:



The 2019 RISE call will open on
4 December 2018 and close on 2
April 2019

Further information: [H2020
participant portal](#)



- Enhanced cooperation and transfer of knowledge between sectors and disciplines
- Strengthening of international and intersectoral collaborative networks
- Boosting of R&I capacity among participating organisations

At system level:

- Increase in international, interdisciplinary and intersectoral mobility of researchers in Europe
- Strengthening of Europe's human capital base in R&I
- Increase in Europe's attractiveness as a leading destination for R&I
- Better quality R&I contributing to Europe's competitiveness and growth

Interest for Japanese research institutions

From 2007 to 2017, FP7 and Horizon 2020 have generated a total of 324 Japanese participations in 219 projects (signed grant agreements) with an EC contribution of a little more than EUR 11 million. About 70 percent of Japanese entities have participated in FP7 and Horizon 2020 funded projects without receiving financial contribution from the EU. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) related projects rank first with 115 projects, accounting for more than 30 percent of the total Japanese participation. The collaborative action with the major number of projects is the Research and Innovation Staff Exchange scheme with 70 projects, 49 funded during FP7 (IRSES) and 21 in Horizon 2020 (RISE).

MSCA RISE eligible costs for secondments (EUR, person/month).

Credit: NCP Japan

€ (Person/month)

Not applicable

Partially Applicable to Japanese Partner

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action	Staff member unit cost * person/month Top-up allowance	Institutional unit cost * person/month	
		Research, training and networking costs	Management and indirect costs
Research and Innovation Staff Exchange	(2.100)	1.800	700

Travel
Accommodation
Subsistence cost

Purchasing consumables
Laboratory cost
Participation conference, workshops, activities coordination, and review meetings

Administrative and financial management, logistics, ethics, legal advice, documentation etc.

participate in the staff exchange actions).

However, another advantage for Japanese institutions is that, while direct funding of third countries organisations is not permitted within Horizon 2020 (apart exceptional cases), some part of the RISE funding can be transmitted to Japanese institutions which host the participants in the exchange programme via bilateral partnership agreements with members of the RISE consortia (see figure). In most cases though, a matching fund is necessary on the Japanese side to allow Japanese organisations to also send participants to European

institutions (funds such as the JSPS Core-to-Core are very popular to this purpose).



The 2018 MSCA RISE call results

The 2018 RISE call opened on 22 November 2017 and closed on 21 March 2018. The results of the proposal evaluations were unveiled in late June 2018. A total of 275 proposals were submitted in response to this call. The number of proposals for each scientific panel is shown below:

- Chemistry (CHE): 24
- Economic Sciences (ECO): 10
- Information Science and Engineering (ENG): 79
- Environment and Geosciences (ENV): 39
- Life Sciences (LIF): 45
- Mathematics (MAT): 8
- Physics (PHY): 26
- Social Sciences and Humanities (SOC): 44

Out of these 275 proposals, 176 were eligible and above the threshold for selection, with a total budget request of 175.2 million EUR. 81 of those were finally selected in the 2018 call ([see here for a complete list](#)).

Two RISE projects especially involving Japan

Among the selected projects, two especially mention Japan, from even within their title:

- INTENSE: particle physics experiments at the high intensity frontier, from new physics to spin-offs. A cooperative Europe - United States - Japan effort; and
- JENNIFER2: Japan and Europe Network for Neutrino and Intensity Frontier Experimental Research 2.

‘JENNIFER’ MSCA RISE project

The JENNIFER2 project is a follow up to the [JENNIFER MSCA RISE](#) project, which started in April 2015 and is scheduled to end in March 2019. Its official description states:

„European particle physics groups interested in searching signals of new physics both with neutrinos, at T2K experiment, and at the intensity frontier, with the Belle-II experiment at the SUPERKEKB machine, want to share between them and with KEK laboratory their knowledge in data analysis and detector technologies. Such knowledge sharing will enhance skills and competences of all participants, will allow Europe to play a primary role in the search for deviations from the actually known fundamental physics in the flavour sector and, last but not least, will produce an unprecedented collaboration with Japanese scientists on the ground of dissemination and outreach.“

The consortium is coordinated by the Institute of Nuclear Physics, Italy, and includes institutions from Germany, Austria, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Turkey, France, Spain, Poland and the UK. From Japan, two institutions are listed as partner organisations: High Energy Accelerator Research Organisation (KEK), and the University of Tokyo.



‘INTENSE’ MSCA RISE project

INTENSE promotes the collaboration among European, US and Japanese researchers involved in the most important particle physics research projects at the high intensity frontier, and technological spin-offs originating from that research.

Japan played a crucial role in establishing the current picture of the behaviour of elementary particles named neutrinos, most notably with the observation of their oscillations, which in turn firmly proved that neutrinos have a mass. We still don't know the value of their mass, though. What we know is that it must be extremely small, so small to demand explanations from outside of the current Standard Model of particle physics. Neutrino data from the past couple of decades (including some puzzling anomalies) are a crucial input to new theories, which in turn predict new phenomena that are potentially observable by a new generation of experiments in the US with a strong European and Japanese participation.

Funded until 2022, INTENSE will span three complementary directions: new neutrino experiments; a novel search for decays of the muon (another elementary particle, which shares the same properties of the electron apart from a much larger mass) that are suppressed in the Standard Model but are predicted at an observable rate by the same theories that would explain the neutrino oscillations; and finally, multidisciplinary collaboration through

“muography”, which uses cosmic-ray muons to image the interior of large targets, including volcanoes, glaciers and archaeological sites. Andrea Giammanco will coordinate the work package devoted to the latter endeavour, which includes particle physicists from the Earthquake Research Institute in Tokyo, Nagoya University, INFN (Italy), Bern University (Switzerland), Wigner RCP (Hungary), UCLouvain and Ghent (Belgium), as well as volcanologists from INGV (Italy) and UCLouvain (Belgium), and two private companies: TECNO IN (Italy) and B12 (Belgium). Other important partners, including CERN, are involved in INTENSE but not in its muography work package.



Muon detector from the ‘Scan Pyramids’ mission (Nature 557, 2018)



Andrea Giammanco obtained his PhD in particle physics in 2003 at Scuola Normale Superiore, in Pisa (Italy).

He is now a Senior Researcher at UCLouvain, where he works since 2005 at the Centre for Cosmology, Particle Physics and Phenomenology. After his PhD he became a member of the CMS experiment at the CERN's Large Hadron Collider, where he held several coordination roles along the years. Since 2016, he is active in "muography" (imaging with cosmic rays).

Hiroyuki Tanaka is a Professor at the Center for High Energy Geophysics Research of the Earthquake Research Institute of the University of Tokyo, and is the leading expert on muography.

Interview of Andrea Giammanco, work package coordinator; and Hiroyuki Tanaka, coordinator on Japanese side of the 'INTENSE' project

- First of all, congratulations for the success in getting your project, INTENSE, funded under this year's MSCA RISE call. Can you describe to us what will be the actions foreseen under this project from the European and Japanese side?

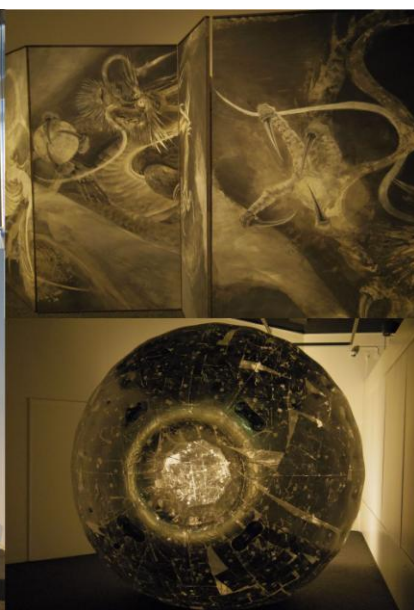
AG: In the INTENSE project will make use of the RISE funding to allow both inter-sectoral or inter-continental mobility. The infrastructure for the fundamental-physics experiments proposed is mostly located in the US, and we will give the opportunity to many European particle physicists to spend extended periods there, to participate to the construction, data taking and analysis work, as well as visiting their collaborators in Japan. The work package that I will coordinate is a bit special, devoted to spin-offs in the so called "muography", therefore the private sector has a very important role to play. Through mutual visits, we will facilitate the bi-directional transfer of knowledge between academic and non-academic partners, and between European and Japanese researchers.

HT: Volcanoes, cultural heritage, and social infrastructures all present important problems to both Europe and Japan. Resources that can be used to address these problems with muographic observations can be globally shared by sending researchers in Japan to Europe and inviting European scientists to Japan. This is the purpose for the cooperation between Japanese and European muography networks.

- How did the idea come to put up with a proposal for this year's RISE call? What would you say is the advantage of the RISE programme, from the European and from the Japanese side?

AG: I was contacted by Simone Donati (University of Pisa, Italy), who had the original idea for this RISE network and is going to be its overarching coordinator, as he was thinking about muography as a way to complement fundamental research with an immediate societal return of the project. I am not an expert in neutrino experiments, I spent most of my career in one of the LHC experiments at CERN, but since a couple of years I am active in muography and I have some experience with H2020-MSCA networks, although of a different kind (Innovative Training Networks, ITN), so a colleague suggested to Simone that I could be a good match. And indeed, it was a real pleasure to work with him in setting this proposal up, and I think that we both learned a lot.

Being very enthusiastic about my recent activity in muography, I decided to propose a new ITN network entirely devoted to that. The decision was taken in Tokyo, in the occasion of the Muographers General Assembly of 2016, which featured a discussion about international funding sources. The timing was very fortunate, as we still had a couple of months before the deadline of the call of 2017, and many representatives of the most active teams in Europe and Japan were attending that meeting in Tokyo. We didn't succeed, but we were very close to the threshold for funding. And although we didn't get funded, the effort



invested was not in vain: it turned out that this failed attempt acted a catalyser, created a channel of communication between disconnected groups that discovered to have a potential for working together, and when Simone invited me to think about a "muography" work package for INTENSE it was extremely easy to recruit enthusiastic participants among those who had already joined the ITN bid. Japanese researchers in particular have been among the pioneers of this novel imaging technique, so there is an obvious interest for European researchers to learn from them and start new collaborations.

HT: The University of Tokyo has already signed the agreements with multiple institutions in Europe to promote cooperation in muography. Therefore forming a muography network between Europe and Japan seemed a natural next step.

- Finally, in view of potential candidate projects to next year's upcoming call (deadline in April 2019), could you give us a quick feedback on the preparations that were necessary to setup the project, and the hurdles to write the proposal; as well as, from the Japanese side, if you have any plans for matching funds?

AG: Before even starting writing the first line of text, a lot of time had to be invested in distance-chats and e-mails among the potentially interested people. Hiroyuki Tanaka (University of Tokyo) and Giulio Saracino (University of Napoli, Italy) put me in contact with their most relevant collaborators, and I have no doubts that without them it would have been simply impossible to set a reasonable work package in place. It is important to have motivated partners: if someone is not reacting fast during this exploratory phase, or is dubious of the interest of participating to such a network, it's definitely better to give up immediately, no matter how well that partner would fit in the activities of the network "on paper".

HT: The JSPS core to core program accelerates our networking speed by supporting the costs for travelling from Japan to Europe that the RISE cannot cover. Enabling better EU-JP intercontinental mobility, the community will become more diversified and activated.

Andrea, Hiroyuki, thank you for your time!



Meet Dr. Matthew DiFranco – Chair, Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)

- EURAXESS Japan: Could you tell our readers a bit about your research background and what are you working on right now?

Matthew DiFranco: I originally studied Materials Science and Engineering as an undergrad at Drexel University in Philadelphia. After working for 3 years in IT consulting, I moved to London to pursue a master's in computer science (and do something adventurous in moving overseas). Professionally, I was motivated to work more closely to the cutting edge of computing, rather than working in corporate IT.

My research from that point until now has focused on image processing in medical imaging: I spent 3 years in London at UCL, then obtained my PhD in computer science in 2010 at University College Dublin, where I investigated machine learning in digital pathology.

I have lived in Austria since completing my PhD, working at the Medical Universities of Innsbruck and Vienna, the latter in part during my MSCA Intra-European Fellowship.

I've recently become self-employed in order to work as a research scientist with a neuroscience lab based at the University of California San Francisco.



Born and raised in New Jersey, I did my undergraduate degree in Materials Science and Engineering at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After 3 years as an IT consultant, I moved to London in 2003 with the intention of completing a 1-year master's program in Computer Science at University College London, and then going back to the US. But then life happened, and after 2 more years at UCL as a research assistant, I moved to Dublin for a PhD program in Computer Science at University College Dublin. During my PhD, the economy crashed in Ireland (and pretty much everywhere else). I spent two months in Vienna for a summer school and lab visit in 2008, where I developed a collaboration at the Medical University of Vienna (MUW) which would lead to my application for a Marie Curie Individual Fellowship to move to Vienna. Last year I left my job as a scientist at MUW to work independently as a researcher and consultant.

- You received the Marie Curie Individual Fellowship as an American researcher moving to Europe. What motivated you to apply and how have those two years impacted your research and more broadly your career development?

Although I was born and raised in the US, I completed my PhD in Ireland and applied for a Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship to carry out a research project in Austria. My motivation came after spending two months in Vienna during my PhD visiting a lab and attending a summer school. I met some researchers who were working on similar topics to me, and also enjoyed the quality of life and general vibe in Vienna. Carrying out the fellowship, I was given responsibility for managing my budget and setting my own research goals. The experience can be seen as very good preparation for starting one's own research group.

- Would you encourage other non-European researchers to apply for an MSCA fellowship? Why?

Yes, of course! I have often encouraged colleagues and friends in research to consider an MSCA fellowship. Some have reservations due to issues related to mobility, including close family and community ties, the impact to a significant other, and on family life. These concerns are real and meaningful: mobility is not



for everyone. However, carrying out an MSCA fellowship can have a profound impact on your career, and often yourself. You are challenged to adapt to a new culture and work environment, but also given the independence to develop your own research ideas in a setting which should ideally enable you to achieve your goals.

- Congratulations on becoming the Chair for Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) this February for a two-year period. Can you tell us what the MCAA is and what your goals/visions are for your tenure?

MCAA is a network of researchers who share a common experience: participation in an MSCA research project. That participation includes early-stage researchers in International Training Networks (ITNs) and experienced researchers carrying out Individual Fellowships (IFs). In addition, MSCA COFUND and RISE participants are also eligible for membership, as are project leaders from all calls.

The newly elected MCAA Board is dedicated to improving the internal governance of the MCAA, which is a lot of behind the scenes work, but which we hope will ensure the sustainability of MCAA. In addition, we are committed to raising the profile of MCAA, and of research careers and scientists in general, through our career development workshops, career fairs, networking events, original content, and science policy activities. Ultimately, we want academia and industry alike to recognize the value of the MSCA experience when searching for new staff, and we want to use our collective experience and knowledge to impact and shape European science policy.

- Since its launch, MCAA has been rapidly growing in number of members as well as chapters in Europe and beyond. Could you update our readers on some statistics (number of members, chapters, male/female, European/non-European, etc.)?

Back in 2013 when the MCAA was created we had just over 1500 members; this has steadily risen over the past four years, and we will reach 11 000 members any day now. We are a youthful organization, with nearly fifty percent of members under 35, and only about 6 percent over fifty; this reflects in part the strong growth of the Marie Curie program over the years of successive EU research framework programs. Gender-wise, the network is about 60 percent male, which is probably a reflection on persisting lower participation of women in many science fields. Nevertheless, many of our most active members are women.

- EURAXESS Worldwide and MCAA have been collaborating on many fronts now. What areas of collaboration do you see as potential in the near future?

We are already seeing close collaboration between EURAXESS Worldwide and MCAA Chapters in North America, ASEAN, Brazil, China, and India. We hope

“MCAA has nearly **11,000 registered members** in our web portal.

Members engage in networking, career development and public outreach through our 29 regional chapters and 10 working groups. In addition, our working groups also develop original content for webinars, workshops and conferences, develop communications strategies for MCAA, and lead science policy initiatives. MCAA is governed by an 11-person Board, elected by its members, of which I am currently Chair, and for which I previously served as an Ordinary Board member.”

“In terms of **nationality**, we have members from very many countries worldwide, but the top five nationalities are Italian, Spanish, German, French, and Indian in that order. As we are all about international mobility, most of our members are based outside their country of birth, and our top five countries for resident members are the UK, Germany, Spain, France, and Italy, again in that order. As for research fields, our top two areas are Life-Sciences, followed by Engineering, but the third place goes to Social Sciences and Humanities – so we are not all wearing white coats in laboratories.”



that EURAXESS Worldwide can leverage its MCAA Honorary Membership to establish similar collaborations with MCAA in Latin America and the Caribbean and Japan.

- What would you say the benefit is for Japan-based alumni in creating an MCAA Japan Chapter? [Can you give future applicants a word of encouragement?]

An MCAA Japan Chapter would allow MSCA beneficiaries from Japan, or living in Japan, to establish a network of highly qualified researchers who have a shared experience of research mobility in Europe. Benefits of the Chapter include professional networking opportunities, increased access to European and even global collaboration partners, and the potential for mentoring young researchers who are interested in research opportunities in Europe. MCAA is a bottom-up organization, and a Japan Chapter would have the flexibility to define its mission and goals to fit with the local academic, professional and cultural landscape.

Matthew, thank you very much for your time!

EURAXESS Japan and MCAA are calling for Japan-based MSCA fellows or alumni interested in building an MCAA Japan Chapter!



Open Call for MCAA Chapters (excerpt from full call terms and conditions)

Publication date: 2nd November 2016

Deadline for submission of applications: 30th September 2019 (12:00 pm CET)

PRESENTATION AND OBJECTIVES OF MCAA CHAPTERS:

The Marie Curie Alumni Association invites its members to submit proposals for the set-up of Chapters. Financial support can be attributed, within the limit of the available budget. The MCAA Chapters can have a 'geographical' (regional, national or international) dimension, but **cannot be focused on thematic areas**, as each Chapter shall aim to:

- Encourage local networking and to establish mutually-beneficial relationships between MCAA and its alumni within a defined geographic area;
- Initiate activities that add value to the Alumni network and input to the general body;
- Recruit, attract, support and facilitate connections between MC fellows and alumni;
- Build networks with external partners
- Sponsor and support activities that will enhance the image of MCAA.

The maximum sum that can be attributed to a Chapter is € 5000 (five thousand euros). The total amount to be allocated to a selected chapter is determined at the discretion of the MCAA Executive Committee. The allocated budget cannot be attributed retroactively, and all costs must be justified.



EURAXESS Japan Activities Update



TEAM UP TO BRING YOU
MORE RESEARCH JOBS IN
EUROPE AND JAPAN!

If you want to check the offers on the EURAXESS Japan homepage, either scroll down on japan.euraxess.org or go directly to:

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide/japan/offers>

On the JREC-IN portal, you may find the offers from Europe within the [English-language part of the portal](#)

EURAXESS and JREC-IN Portal agreement on job offers exchange

Starting in August 2018, the main European online job platform for research-related jobs, EURAXESS (euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs), funded and maintained by the European Commission; and the Japanese job platform for researchers JREC-IN Portal (jrecin.jst.go.jp), funded by the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), have agreed to exchange job offers in English on their respective online platforms.

EURAXESS will host all job offers advertised in English on the JREC-IN Portal (approximately one tenth of the total number of offers hosted on this platform); and JREC-IN Portal will promote all job offers advertised on the EURAXESS portal funded under the European Research Council and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, both funding schemes of the European Union's framework programme for research and innovation Horizon 2020.

This mutual hosting will increase the visibility of offers in Japan for Europe-based researchers and offers in Europe for Japan-based researchers, contributing to a better brain circulation between Japan and Europe. It is the very first such agreement concluded by JST for its JREC-IN Portal, confirming the strong interest of Japan to further internationalise its research and innovation workforce, and its interest in strengthening its ties with Europe.

European Innovation Day 2018

The European Innovation Day 2018 (EID 2018), to be held on 15 October at the Delegation of the European Union to Japan, Tokyo, is our annual event showcasing Europe's excellence in research and innovation.

Registration & application here: bit.ly/EID2018Japan

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

This event is jointly organised by EURAXESS Japan and the EU-Japan Technology Transfer Helpdesk (a service run by the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation), with support from the Delegation of the EU to Japan and Enterprise Europe Network.

It will feature informative sessions on useful services for innovators interested in Europe; case study sessions with European researchers and companies ('Research to Market' sessions); and presentations of various European countries innovation landscapes and success stories.

WHO CAN ATTEND?



It aims to bring together the Japan-based community of innovators, individuals as well as institutions, to help them discover opportunities in and cooperation with Europe. Attendance is free, but registration is required.

