

Completing the first stage of four Horizon 2020 calls – sharing lessons learned

In Creative and Cultural Industries by Jaelithe Swan 25 April, 2017

A report from the Cluster for Sustainable Cities on the recent engagement and learning from EU projects.

Europe is a continent of cities: around a 72 per cent of the EU population (this is approx. 350 million inhabitants) lives in urban settlements, occupying only 9 per cent of Europe's land surface. Over the last century, the urban population of Europe has increased over twenty times and this urbanisation trend will continue in the future.



CCI Faculty are delighted to report that the University of Portsmouth's **Innovation Cluster for Sustainable Cities** has recently joined four EU-wide consortia and participated in the submission of large research proposals. One of the four proposals was developed and is led by Professor Steffen Lehmann: it is on the '**Food-Water-Energy Nexus**' theme.

The Cluster for Sustainable Cities has joined these consortia as a core member, and the scale of the research proposals ranges from Euro 1 million to Euro 14 million in value. Significant learning experiences were gained from this process of developing and submitting the large research proposals and these will be shared at the forthcoming Cluster meeting on 31 May 2017, at 12.30pm.

For instance, establishing such large international consortia for H2020 and similar programmes comes with a strong time commitment and takes a significant effort over four to five months. Reaching out to key stakeholders overseas was essential to set-up a strong and efficient working platform of like-minded researchers, with the aim to attract the best partners to collaborate to maximise winning chances. In addition, each consortium members needs to contribute a particular research expertise required to complete the jigsaw puzzle of the methodology, so partners are usually invited strategically to join. To gain the support from like-minded established researchers that are leading in their field increases the success of funding applications.

The four projects are closely aligned with the strategic R&I Plan of the University of Portsmouth, in the key area of 'Sustainability and the Environment'. The projects are international, interdisciplinary and innovative.

- **International:** the consortia include cities, business and stakeholders from the UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Denmark, Austria, Poland, Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic; as well as non-European partners from China, Taiwan, Brazil, Uganda, India, Australia and the United States. The sizes of participating cities ranges from 100,000 population to urban regions of over 25 million people.
- **Interdisciplinary:** the research projects involve a wide range of disciplines engaged in the design and development of sustainable city futures, including social sciences and humanities, engineering, urban planning, architecture, technology, science and health and well-being. All stakeholders involved share a strong commitment to applied research and impact on society.
- **Innovative:** these are so-called 'Innovation Action' calls by the EU and the proposals must be cutting edge to have any chance in this highly competitive process.

"Thank you to everyone involved for supporting our engagement in these key programmes," said Professor Steffen Lehmann.