



Fellowship Report

Organisation sending: National Agency of Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI)

Name of the fellow: Imirjon Peza

Organisation Hosting: Austrian Research Promotion Agency, FFG

Location of the fellowship: Austria

Name of the mentor: Emmanuel Glenck

1. Main tasks done during the fellowship

This fellowship aimed at consolidating existing institutional relations between NASRI and FFG through the informational meetings, sharing of ideas and knowledge as well as exchanging best practices and what works in a specific context in the research and innovation sphere. Below a list of the main tasks performed during this week-long work trip.

Networking and exchange meetings

During the fellowship, meetings at several institutions were held. These aimed at exchanging information on current state of play and potential partnership opportunities, such as with the FFG in EU Partnerships and Missions (capaCITIES project) and WIDERA. Also, the meeting with the Austrian Eureka contact point, Ms. Ines Marinkovic, for the current call, Eureka LinkUp, was beneficial and insightful due to the Austrian support and encouragement for successful Albanian projects.

Further networking meetings were organised with the Austrian Cluster 3 NCP, Ms. Jeannette Klonk, who highlighted the need to increase cooperation between NCPs, EC and end-users and practitioners. The meeting with the Austrian WIDERA NCP, Mr. Ralf Konig stressed the importance of Albanian institutions to become familiar with the recent developments in Horizon Europe, i.e. the 2025 Work Programme and the WIDERA calls. He identified multiple topics of interest for applications and where consortia could be formed. In the same context, he recommended leveraging contacts and work done by existing projects and consortia where Albania is represented.

ZSI was next on the agenda of meetings where NASRI fellows met with Mr. Klaus Schuch and Ms. Inese Gavarane, where participants exchanged experiences and information on new and potential avenues for collaboration through Horizon Europe or bilateral projects. The LUKE project seeking to support and foster networks of Ukrainian and European researchers was presented and identified as an opportunity for future collaboration.

The meeting at the Ministry of Women, Science and Research (BMFWF) provided an overview of the latest developments in its field of activity. Mr. Christian Gollubits hosted the fellows and gave a presentation of the Ministry's actions. The potential to expand bilateral cooperation was discussed as well as opportunities to exchange experiences in the national programmes' context.

Social event

FFG Frühlingsfest, the annual gala event of the Agency, gave the opportunity to engage in a social setting with FFG staff and form new contacts.



Training

On 13-14 May 2025, NASRI fellow participated in the Live FFG Training Webinar on Proposal writing for a Maria Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship, where attendees received step-by-step instructions on the application process and asked specific questions to the trainers. This training was designed to be interactive with practical exercises and breakout rooms of 2-3 persons to engage more directly and exchange experiences in MSCA.

2. Tips and recommendations on finding good coordinators

The meetings with staff from Austrian institutions mentioned above yielded useful tips and recommendations that can be used as reference to successful collaborations in Horizon Europe applications in the future. Some of these are provided below:

- **Know where you are and where you plan to go** - an analysis of the current state of play for NASRI and a clear vision of the future is important when looking for potential partners
- **Use learnings, insights and contacts from current & previous projects, missions and initiatives** - national and international projects, networks and platforms are useful
- **Make use of resources provided by the Commission to identify potential partners and coordinators** - Horizon Dashboard, CORDIS, other platforms serve as information hubs that have contacts to coordinators and lead partners
- **Dedicate the appropriate resources to project management, stakeholder engagement and dissemination and communication activities** - managing resources effectively is key in achieving future goals
- **Update internal practices and processes to keep up with developments and ever-growing workload** - research and innovation are at the forefront of development and the processes behind them must change appropriately

3. Conclusion

This fellowship was an opportunity to foster closer ties with partners in Austria, who have shown consistently their support of the research and innovation ecosystem in Albania through bilateral project, Twinning (2023-2024 IPA Twinning Light project with NASRI), Eureka, and the number of collaborations and joint actions between two countries. It is the opinion of the fellow that this goodwill and genuine commitment to strengthening ties must be leveraged and developed further for mutual interest and advantage. Learning from the experience of Austrian coordinators can pave the way for NASRI and other Albanian stakeholders in taking up that role more widely and actively in the future.

