EURAXESS ASEAN Newsletter is a quarterly electronic newsletter, 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.

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http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess

EURAXESS ASEAN

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to our 3rd quarterly newsletter for 2017. We continue to work with researchers in ASEAN on strengthening their science communication skills. This quarter, we organised 10 workshops covering topics such as effective proposal preparation for European research funding programmes, and how to communicate your science to non-scientists.

In one of our Newsletter interviews, Dr Sanna Fowler, who led the science communication workshops, discusses the increasingly important role that science communication workshops plays in battling “fake news.” And Dr Siti Zarina Zaimal Rahim from Malaysia shares with us her excitement at winning Falling Walls Lab Singapore. Falling Walls Labs are one of the world’s top science communication competitions.

The European Research Council (ERC) funds ground-breaking frontier research projects across all fields of science, and offers selective and generous grants, independence, recognition and visibility. These are some of the world’s most prestigious research grants; 6 Nobel Prizes, 4 Fields Medals and dozens of important prizes have been awarded to ERC grantees. We provide you with a briefing on the latest ERC calls.

Next month, senior officials from ASEAN and from the European Commission will meet in Naypyidaw, Myanmar for the 7th ASEAN-EU Dialogue Meeting on Science and Technology. We were fortunate in having an opportunity to interview Dr Kostas Glinos who will lead the EU mission to this meeting.

In the coming months, we have “European Research Days” planned across the region. Please follow us on Facebook as well as visit the EURAXESS ASEAN portal for details.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter, and welcome your feedback.

Your EURAXESS ASEAN Team
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1. Briefing

1.1 The European Research Council (ERC) launches new grants scheme for multiple principle investigators

In early August, the European Research Council (ERC) announced its 2018 grant competitions, and introduced the Synergy Grants. The aim of Synergy Grants is to address ambitious research questions that can only be answered by the coordinated work of a small group of two to four Principal Investigators and their teams, bringing together their complementary skills, knowledge and resources in unprecedented ways.

The ultimate goal of the scheme is to give support to a close collaborative interaction that will enable transformative research at the forefront of science, capable of yielding ground-breaking or even unpredictable scientific results and/or cross-fertilizing disciplines. The ambition is of course to open the way to results that are more than just the sum of the Principal Investigators’ individual contributions.

The ERC’s president, Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, said that the grants had been "much anticipated. These grants can trigger unconventional collaborations, allow for the emergence of new fields of study and help put scientists working in Europe at the global forefront. By providing €250 million of funding for the Synergy Grant call, the ERC Scientific Council intends to make possible substantial advances at the frontiers of knowledge which would be impossible for researchers working alone.”

The scheme is open to all researchers from anywhere in the world and who reside in any country in the world at the time of the application. However the host institution must be established in an EU Member State or in an Associated Country.

Each Principal Investigator must spend minimum 30% of their working time on the ERC project and 50% in Europe. Only exceptionally competitive proposals are likely to be funded.

The 2018 Work Programme also includes all the well-known and established ERC funding schemes: Starting, Consolidator and Advanced Grants, as well as...
Proof of Concept Grants for ERC grantees who wish to explore the innovation potential of their research results.

- **Starting Grant** (StG) for researchers 2-7 years after award of PhD.
- **Consolidator Grant** (CoG) for researchers 7-12 years after award of PhD.
- **Advanced Grant** (AdG) for established research leaders.
- **Proof of Concept Grant** (PoC) for ERC grantees wishing to explore the innovation potential of their research results.

### Indicative Call Timetable 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calls</th>
<th>Call date</th>
<th>Deadline(s)</th>
<th>Budget € million (estimated grants)</th>
<th>Indicative date for signature of grant agreement</th>
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### ERC Synergy Grants in Brief

**Who can apply?**

A group of **two to maximum four Principal Investigators (PIs)** – of which one will be designated as the corresponding PI (cPI) – working together and bringing different skills and resources to tackle ambitious research problems. **No specific eligibility criteria regarding the academic training** are foreseen for ERC Synergy Grants. PIs must present an **early achievement track record** or a **ten-year track-record**, whichever is most appropriate.
Proposals will be evaluated on the sole criterion of scientific excellence which, in the case the ERC Synergy Grants, takes on the additional meaning of outstanding intrinsic synergetic effect.

What proposals are eligible?

- **Criteria**
  Applications can be made in any field of research. The ERC's grants operate on a 'bottom-up' basis without predetermined priorities. In the case of the ERC Synergy Grants, applications must demonstrate that the proposed research cannot be carried out by a single PI working alone.

- **Location**
  Research must be conducted by all PIs in a public or private research organisation (known as a Host Institution). It could be the Host Institution where the applicant already works, or any other Host Institution established in one of the EU Member States or Associated Countries.

- **Team**
  ERC Synergy grants support projects carried out by a group of two to four individual researchers who can employ researchers of any nationality as team members. It is also possible to have one or more team members located in a third country. Vacancies for team members interested in joining an ERC-led research project can be published on the EURAXESS-Jobs portal.

How much?

Synergy Grants can be up to a maximum of 10 million euros for a period of 6 years (pro rata for projects of shorter duration). However, an additional 4 million euros can be requested in the proposal in total to cover:

1. eligible 'start-up' costs for Principal Investigators moving to the EU or an Associated Country from elsewhere as a consequence of receiving an ERC grant and/or

**EURAXESS ASEAN**

“Believe in yourselves, work hard, and think beyond the possible. Malaysia Boleh!”

ERC grantee Prof Yee Whye The, Oxford University, UK

http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess
2. the purchase of major equipment and/or
3. access to large facilities.

An ERC grant can cover up to 100% of the total eligible direct costs of the research plus a contribution of 25% of the total eligible costs towards indirect costs.

How to apply?
ERC grant applications can only be submitted in response to a Call for Proposals. The ERC has yearly calls for proposals covering all scientific fields. For an ERC grant application to be complete, it needs to include the administrative forms, the research proposal and the supplementary documents. The completed proposal should be submitted by the specified closing date.

Calls are published on this page, the European Commission's Participant Portal and in the Official Journal of the European Union.

For a step-by-step guide to the application process visit the ERC website.

Where do I find more information?
Official webpage of the European Research Council.
ERC Funding Opportunities Explained – Presentation by Dr Martin Penny, ERC Executive Agency
Information for Applicants
ERC Work Programme 2018
Interview with Dr Martin Penny, ERC Executive Agency on Youtube
View the ERC’s step-by-step video – An introduction to the application process, including tips & tricks for the interview
Hear it from the experts – Tips on ERC Grant Application
For personalised assistance please contact your nearest EURAXESS Worldwide representative.

1.2 EURAXESS ASEAN celebrates ERC’s 10th anniversary

2017 marked the 10th anniversary of the European Research Council. Since its creation in 2007, the ERC has awarded research grants worth nearly 11 billion euros to almost 7,000 scientists and scholars from all over the world, both early-career and senior researchers, carrying out their ambitious research projects in all scientific disciplines. Its support has been acknowledged in close to 100,000 international scientific journal articles. Among the ERC grantees are highly accomplished ASEAN nationals working in prestigious institutions across Europe. An estimated 300 ASEAN researchers work as team members on ERC-funded research projects.
In celebration of the ERC’s milestone, over 140 celebratory events took place in Europe and around the world including here in Southeast Asia. In August, EURAXESS ASEAN joined forces with Thailand’s National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) and Chulalongkorn University to showcase the opportunities offered by the ERC to the national research community. Dr Danupon Nanongkai, Thailand’s first recipient of an ERC grant, was at hand to share his experience in applying for an ERC grant. He provided the 80 or so workshop participants with excellent advice on how to be successful in a grant application. Dr Danupon is currently an Assistant Professor at KTH Royal Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. A copy of Dr Danupon’s presentation can be accessed here.

A second event is scheduled to take place in Singapore in the first week of December.

2. Hot topic – ASEAN and EU strengthening cooperation in science, technology and innovation

This year, ASEAN and the EU celebrate 40 years of a close and fruitful partnership, characterised by shared goals of peace and prosperity, and relations based on trust, mutual respect, common interests and values. This year also marks the 50th anniversary since ASEAN was formed.

The population of ASEAN is now more than 600 million, equivalent to 9% of the world’s total. A report published in 2016 by Thomson Reuters shows that ASEAN nearly doubled its share of the world’s research papers since 2006, and a key component in ASEAN’s progress in science and innovation has been co-authorship of scientific papers with international partners including researchers from Europe.

The research team of the EU-funded SEA-EU-NET project carried out a study from 2014 to 2016, assessing the research output in ASEAN Member States by combining Web of Science and Scopus statistics. Globally, the EU is the strongest partner in co-publication collaboration. 32% of all international co-publications (and 13% of all publications) in ASEAN feature at least one EU-

1 The full report can be downloaded here: http://stateofinnovation.thomsonreuters.com/asean-an-emerging-hub-in-research-and-innovation
Collaborative regional science, technology and innovation activities between ASEAN and the EU are developed mainly through the ASEAN-EU Dialogue on Science and Technology that takes place at regular intervals at Senior Official level between the ASEAN Committee of Science and Technology (COST) and the EU represented by the European Commission.

The 7th ASEAN-EU S&T Dialogue on Science and Technology meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 19 October in Naypyidaw, Myanmar as part of the 10th ASEAN Science, Technology and Innovation Week (ASTIW). This is an important event in the ASEAN calendar. The theme of this year’s event is “Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable, Inclusive and Equitable Growth.”

**Interview with Dr Kostas Glinos, Head of the EU delegation to the 7th ASEAN-EU Dialogue Meeting on Science and Technology in Naypyidaw, Myanmar**

EURAXESS ASEAN recently had an opportunity to discuss with Dr Glinos the delegation’s objectives for the upcoming Dialogue meeting.
**Why is scientific collaboration with international partners important for the European Commission?**

As knowledge production is increasingly distributed around the world and the competition for excellence intensifies and becomes global, researchers in the European Union need to be able to work with the best among their peers and to access scientific resources wherever they are located. For example, Europeans produce an impressive 32% of the most-cited scientific publications despite representing just 6% of the world’s population. However, this also means that two thirds of high-impact publications are produced outside of Europe. This pool of research talent and know-how provides enormous potential for win-win collaborations.

Apart from excellence, another driver for global scientific collaboration is the need to find solutions to global challenges that transcend geographical borders, such as those represented by the Sustainable Development Goals. An example is the cooperation the European Commission engaged in about three years ago to find vaccines to combat Ebola. This cooperation helped develop all of the three vaccines that are available today. Another example is the European Commission’s investment in environment-related research, much of which is done in coordination with international partners.

This is why the European Commission follows an “open to the world” policy, proactively engaging with international partners world-wide and welcoming organisations from countries outside the EU in the Horizon 2020 programme on research and innovation.

**The European Commission and Southeast Asia have been working on intensifying scientific collaboration for the past decade or so. Can you highlight the key achievements to date?**

There are a number of projects underway under Horizon 2020 with partners from several Southeast Asian countries, for example in aquaculture or health. There is also a healthy number of Marie Curie fellowships awarded to Southeast Asian researchers to conduct research in Europe and vice versa, as well as good cooperation both with the ASEAN Secretariat and at bilateral level with most of the countries of the region. However, given the size of the two regions, the rising research excellence in Southeast Asia and the amount of common challenges, we feel much more could and should be done.

**How would you like to see scientific collaboration between Europe and Southeast Asia progress in the next decade?**
I would like to see much more of it. We need more joint projects, especially those focused on sustainable development, and also more intra- and inter-regional scientific mobility. On the EU side, the resources are there: Horizon 2020 collaborative projects are open to participants from anywhere in the world, and 8 of the 10 member states of ASEAN are eligible for funding¹. However, what could be improved is awareness of the available opportunities, networking Southeast Asia organisations – like research centres and universities – in preparing research proposals with their European peers. Improving these aspects would certainly make a big difference.

The European Commission together with multiple countries in Europe and in Southeast Asia has also been steering a new initiative that aims to bring together Southeast Asian and European researchers and innovators to collaborate on topics of mutual interest. With the Southeast Asia-Europe Joint Funding Scheme (JFS) we hope to develop a systematic approach to joint research and innovation activities between our two regions. I hope that we will see more Southeast Asian countries participating in this scheme in the coming years!

*The European Commission will be present at the ASEAN S&T week in Myanmar’s capital Naypyidaw in October. What can visitors expect?*

It will be a busy couple of days. In the afternoon of 18 October, we plan to hold an information session on Horizon 2020, which will announce calls over €30 billion that will be launched at the beginning of November. On 19 October we will hold an information session on the Joint Funding Scheme mentioned above and we will also have our EU-ASEAN dialogue between senior officials. The European Commission together with EURAXESS will also have a booth at the exhibition. I hope we see lots of people there!

*Thank you Dr Glinos. See you in Naypyidaw!*
Welcome to Luxembourg
- video

Belval – the City of Science

Luxembourg is becoming an energetic international research center. A great part of this ambition is and will be realised in Belval.
3. EURAXESS Members in Focus: LUXEMBOURG

LUXEMBOURG - heartland of Europe that embraces diversity

Meet LUXEMBOURG – an Inspiring Place!

Strategically located in the heart of Europe, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is a strategic smart business, research and innovation location with a national character of openness, dynamism, and reliability. For centuries, the country has been at the heart of a multitude of cultural influences, partly because of its geography but also because of trade, industrialisation, and immigration. It has protected its woodlands, shaped its landscapes with winegrowing, farming, and architecture. It has cultivated linguistic diversity, cultural originality, and economic freedom. It was also considered for a long time that the prosperity of Luxembourg was due to the richness of its soil. Once one of the main steel plant sites of Europe, the country became a financial place over the years due to the steel crisis in the seventies, before morphing recently into a research and innovation hub. Today, Luxembourg is one of the most attractive countries in the world for working and living, and a genuine societal laboratory.


LUXEMBOURG Policy and Strategy

LUXEMBOURG IS A DYNAMIC COUNTRY, WHERE RESEARCH HAS BECOME A CENTRAL ISSUE

Public research in Luxembourg is young and dynamic with research policy contributing to the transition of the country towards a knowledge-based society. The overarching rationale behind research policy is to strengthen innovation as a driver of sustainable socioeconomic development and to contribute to a further diversification of the economy by developing new and strengthening existing high added-value economic activities. In this sense, research and innovation policy has been one of the major priorities of the Government since 1999 with Government budget outlays rising from 28 million euros in 2000 to approximately 400 million euros in 2016. This proactive and committed policy approach puts Luxembourg firmly on the map of European research. This is illustrated among others with the position of the University of Luxembourg, while only created in 2003, ranging 11th in the latest “Times Higher Education” ranking of the 200 Universities under 50 years.
Public research is mostly performed at

- the University of Luxembourg;
- one of the 3 public research centres; Lux
  - Luxembourg Institute of Technology (LIST)
  - Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH)
  - Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER)
- the Max Planck Institute Luxembourg for International, European and Regulatory Procedural Law

Innovation

Luxinnovation is a key partner for companies looking to engage in innovative activities in Luxembourg or aiming to expand their business at the international level.

Recruitment Opportunities

Luxembourg is a dynamic country, where research has become a central issue

Public Sector Recruitment Opportunities

Most researchers in Luxembourg are employed in public sector institutions, with University of Luxembourg being one of the most important employers of research staff. All positions open at the public sector institutions and the University of Luxembourg are published on the EURAXESS webpage.

Private Sector Recruitment Opportunities

The financial sector is the main driving force behind the Grand Duchy's economy. The Grand Duchy's authorities have adopted a policy of diversification of the country's economic fabric by providing support for information and communication technologies (ICTs), logistics, bio- and eco-technologies, research, etc. as well as actively promoting the diversification of the financial marketplace.

Several instruments for investment aid to stimulate R&D activities within companies: grants, loans, venture capital, export credit lowest VAT rate in Europe.

Source: http://www.luxembourg.public.lu

Find innovative partners in the private and public sector.
Funding Opportunities

The Luxembourg National Research Fund (FNR) is the main funder of research activities in Luxembourg. The FNR invests public funds and private donations into research projects in various branches of science and the humanities, with an emphasis on selected core strategic areas. Furthermore, it supports and coordinates activities to strengthen the link between science and society and to raise awareness for research. The FNR also advises the Luxembourg government on research policy and strategy. The FNR has a broad range of international funding opportunities among which bilateral available under the “International Cooperation” section of the Luxembourg National Research Fund website.

Interview with a Singaporean researcher in Luxembourg

Catherine WONG - University of Luxembourg – Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning, Singaporean

How did you hear about Luxembourg and why did you decide to work in Luxembourg?

A colleague of mine in Australia saw an ad for a post-doctoral research position at the University of Luxembourg and sent it to me. She said the job description is a perfect fit for me and that I have to apply for it. I did and after the interview I had a very good feeling about the Professors I would be working with and the department as a whole.

At that time I was deciding whether to take up job offers from Germany, Denmark and Singapore. I chose Luxembourg in the end because I wanted to be in Europe and Luxembourg was the most cosmopolitan of the three options while being quite similar to Singapore.

Name three characteristics about research work in Luxembourg or about Luxembourg in general.

About research in Luxembourg: Global; well-funded; vibrant. About Luxembourg: cosmopolitan; not too crowded; heart of Europe

A message to anyone who is considering looking for partners in research in Luxembourg or moving to Luxembourg for work?
Luxembourg is one of the most open countries in the world to international labour. The amount of bureaucracy in process of settling in Luxembourg can be quite daunting, but overall, the process is fairly smooth once you figure out what you have to do. My advice is: patience…and breathe!

Important Information for Incoming Researchers to Luxembourg

The EURAXESS Luxembourg team is at your full disposal.

EURAXESS, Luxembourg provides information and support to international researchers, all services are free of charge. We provide information about entry conditions, visas and residence permits, Luxembourg in general, the Luxembourgian research landscape, job & funding offers, partnering, events for researchers and much more!

Please read our Foreign Researchers’ guide to Luxembourg, a practical guide on living & working in Luxembourg.

ENTRY CONDITIONS:

Please check if you need a visa.

For working and long-term stays, they require a hosting agreement and a residence permit. See all Luxembourgian embassies and representations around the world.

Fees are waived for researchers from third countries travelling within the EU for the purpose of carrying out scientific research. For additional information on visa issues please visit the EURAXESS Luxembourg website.
4 EURAXESS ASEAN recent activities

4.1 EURAXESS ASEAN helps strengthen the science communication skills of researchers in ASEAN

Researchers need a range of science communications skills ranging from the ability to prepare a coherent project proposal to being able to explain to other researchers and non-researchers about their work. Being able to communicate their research effectively can help scientists write better research papers, secure research funding, and even find a job.

For two weeks in September, EURAXESS ASEAN and Thailand’s National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) co-organised a total of eight workshops across Thailand designed to improve the proposal writing and science communication skills of researchers in Thailand and ASEAN interested in strengthening their research collaboration with Europe. These workshops were organised with the support of the Thailand-Europe Policy Dialogues Support Facility.

Dr Sanna Fowler, who led the science communication workshop sat down with EURAXESS ASEAN on her last day in Bangkok, and shared her views on the growing importance of science communication.

Please tell us how your interest in science communication developed.

I have always enjoyed the reporting side of science (presentations, reviews, posters etc.) but the big ‘revelation’ for me was during my PhD in Mucosal Immunology at Oxford. My funding body was part of an initiative called ‘Researchers in Residence’ that encouraged scientists to go into primary schools and teach three lessons on their subject. We got some basic coaching and then I was left on my own with 30 eight-year olds! I worked harder on those three lessons than anything else, and it was a real baptism of fire, but those kids had so much enthusiasm, it was infectious.

Why do you think science communication is important?

Research no longer happens in Ivory Towers – funding is increasingly competitive and from a wider range of sources. It could be described as a ‘buyer’s’ market, and if you’re trying to sell your science in this environment, you
Sanna Fowler

“Research no longer happens in Ivory Towers – funding is increasingly competitive and from a wider range of sources. It could be described as a ‘buyer’s’ market, and if you’re trying to sell your science in this environment, you need a great pitch.”

need a great pitch. I think it’s no coincidence that countries where a higher proportion of funding for universities comes from non-governmental sources, like the US and the UK, have a more developed science communication scene.

Upheavals like the 1998 autism-MMR vaccine falsehood have thankfully made scientists a lot more proactive about communicating and creating links with the public. But the continuous drip feed of pseudoscience on social media needs scientists to be constantly vigilant and counter with arguments that are relevant to people.

Lastly, improving science communication to non-experts can only be a good thing for communication between peers. After all, how many of us have sat through terrible scientific presentations given by colleagues or even world-leaders in our field?

What is the difference between science communication and journalism?

Science communication is extremely broad and encompasses anything from school’s outreach to diplomacy. In my opinion, good journalism is an essential tool for science communication as it focuses on the relevance of science rather than just the research itself. It also tends to have a more ‘birds-eye’ view of research which is important for joining the dots across disciplines and seeing how things fit together – for example the social and economic changes we can expect with increasing numbers of robots in the workforce.

“Fake news” is very much in the headlines these days. What impact is this having on science communication?

I think fake news is actually a huge opportunity for science communication on two fronts: Firstly, there is now a lot of research going into detecting, tracking and heading off fake news, so hopefully science will help us sift out the real information from the fake. Secondly, amid all the noise, reputable scientists are seen as trusted sources for information, for the media and public alike. need to step up and assume this responsibility.

In your opinion, what are some of the biggest challenges facing researchers in terms of science communication? Finding the time! As science communication is not seen as an essential part of a researcher’s role, it gets pushed to the back after research, teaching, admin, conferences and all the masses of other things that scientists have to fit into a day. I also think it’s the responsibility of universities/research institutions to make resources for science communication available for their scientists. Both have a vested interest in promoting their science and having professional communicators working with experts is the most productive way of doing things.

How can young researchers strengthen their science communication skills?
Read, watch or listen to good science communication! There are some great popular science podcasts and blogs, and you could spend a lifetime surfing through talks on TED for example. Not only will this give you examples of how to communicate better, it will also widen your general scientific knowledge. Many scientists’ general knowledge can be pretty limited since they’re so focused on their particular research area.

What career opportunities are there in the field science communication?

I’m not sure I’m the best person to give advice here; I haven’t followed the ‘typical’ path, which would probably be to get a science communication qualification after your PhD. I took any opportunity I could get to widen my experience as much as possible, either through teaching, writing or public outreach, for example. I also left science for a few years to work in sports marketing. Ultimately, I think you have to just put yourself out there as much as possible, gain visibility and widen your experience.

Could you share some advice for researchers trying to communicate their research to the non-academic community?

Ask yourself why people should listen to you (and being a well-published/well-funded scientist is not an answer here!). Your audience needs to gain something – either information that is relevant to them, or something they’re never heard before that piques their interest. Above all, share your passion for your subject!

This is your third visit to Southeast Asia leading science communication workshops for researchers. What changes have you noticed in terms of the development of science communication in the region?

It’s always an immense privilege to come to Southeast Asia – it’s a region that is young, hungry for change and bursting with energy. The big change is seeing early-stage researchers realise the need to communicate their science. But, I think there is also a desire to give something back and to really change things for the better.
I’m always impressed by the creativity of the researchers I meet in ASEAN countries. Some are working very hard, in difficult conditions such as frequent power cuts, which we never have to deal with here. I’m really hopeful that collaborative initiatives between Europe and ASEAN, like the EURAXESS Worldwide initiative will combine expertise and experience from both sides to find solutions to the problems we face now and in the future.

Thank you Sanna!

4.2 Falling Walls Lab competitions take flight across Southeast Asia

The Falling Walls Lab is a unique interdisciplinary forum for aspiring scientists and professionals in the realms of science, business, politics and the arts and society from around the world. It was initiated on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall. Inspired by this world-changing event on 9 November 1989, the question of every Falling Walls gathering is “Which walls will fall next?”

In the course of the year, international Falling Walls Labs are organised by academic institutions throughout the world – many of those with the support of the EURAXESS Worldwide team. The winners of each international Lab travel to the Falling Walls Lab Finale in Berlin, which takes place every year on 8 November. At the Berlin Lab, 100 innovators receive the opportunity to present their work in front of a distinguished jury and attend the Falling Walls Conference on 9 November where they meet the world’s top scientists.

In 2017, Falling Walls Labs took place in four countries across Southeast Asia. The winners will be traveling to Berlin this November to compete against representatives from 46 other countries for the final event of Falling Walls Lab. Ms Khin Sardar Win emerged as 1st winner of the competition in Myanmar. Dr Jaysuman Puspanathan, a researcher at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia won the Malaysian competition with her winning idea “Breaking the Wall of unseen flow imaging”. They will be joined by the winner of the Indonesian finals which took place on 14 September in Jakarta and Dr Siti Zarina Zaimal Rahim, Singapore’s Falling Walls Lab champion. EURAXESS ASEAN congratulates all winners on their success. Best of luck for the finals!

Interview with the winner of the Falling Walls Lab Singapore, Dr Siti Zarina Zaimal Rahim

Dr Rahim clinched first place at the Falling Walls Lab Singapore on 18 November with her breakthrough idea „Breaking the walls of antibiotic

Following the workshops in Thailand, Sanna put together a series of Idea Books. These are designed as tools for researchers wishing to improve their science communication skills. You can download these Idea Books on the EURAXESS ASEAN portal here.
Zarina is currently working as a research assistant at the NUS Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. She will be competing with representatives from 49 other countries in Berlin for the final event of Falling Walls Lab on 8 November 2017.

**Congratulations on your win! Can you introduce yourself and your career path to our readers?**

My name is Zarina and I've been interested in bacteria for many years! I grew up in a small town in Sarawak, Malaysia and did my Bachelors degree at Stanford University. After that, I moved to Singapore and worked for four years at the NUS Department of Microbiology on antibiotic-resistant tuberculosis. My then-supervisor encouraged me to obtain another degree, since she could see how much I loved being involved in research, so I did my PhD in marine microbiology in conjunction with the NUS Department of Biological Sciences and the Tropical Marine Science Institute. This work is actually my post-PhD research project, and a wonderful synthesis of my previous experiences.

**You are working as a researcher with the National University of Singapore. Can you tell us a little about your research project?**

I recently graduated and only just began work on this project in April. It has been the culmination of great teamwork and effort by many other talented people who came before me. SilenceBac molecules are originally a single chemical found in coral reefs, which were modified by chemists to create the "library" that I worked on with my colleagues. The chemicals can block bacterial signalling in many kinds of disease-causing bacteria, which in turn causes reduced biofilms (aggregations), lower virulence, and greater susceptibility to antibiotics.

**How did you find out about Falling Walls and what caught your attention?**

I found out about Falling Walls earlier in the year when I was job hunting online - at first the strange name leapt out at me. It sounded like a fantastic opportunity to improve my public speaking and science
communication, which I feel are really important skills for modern scientists to stay relevant and supported by our communities. Of course, the fact that there was a chance to go to Berlin was also a great incentive!

_You just won the Falling Walls Lab Singapore competition. How did you convince the jury?_

I am still a little stunned that I won! Based on comments, I think the fact that I really streamlined my slides and background introduction to be as simple and elegant as possible, but then added a bit of technical info to prove that I knew what I was doing, helped to persuade the jury to pick me.

_You will be representing Singapore at the Falling Walls Competition in Berlin in November. What are you looking forward to most?_

I’m really excited to hear about loads more ground-breaking research made by inspiring people!

_Thank you very much and good luck at the Berlin Lab!_

**4.3 Are you looking for research funding opportunities? EURAXESS can help you!**

The EURAXESS web portal makes it even easier for researchers, entrepreneurs, and businesses in Europe and ASEAN to interact with each other. The portal contains thousands of job postings as well as funding and fellowship opportunities.

**Individual researchers:** search for the funding programme you need for your mobility or research cooperation project.

**Funding organisations:** publish your funding opportunities and scholarships to increase your visibility and reach the best candidates worldwide. [Find out more here](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess)
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