

ENRICH WG7 Mentoring Programme

Background

Within the ENRICH COST Action, WG7 has identified the mentoring programme as a high-priority activity for Year 1. The programme contributes directly to WG7 objectives, particularly T7.1: establishing a mentoring programme connecting Early Career Researchers (ECRs) with experienced mentors and supports Action-wide goals of community building and researcher development.

The mentoring programme aims to support ECRs in career planning, both in academia and industry, and professional development. It will foster cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary exchange within ENRICH and strengthen ECR engagement and visibility within the Action.

Structure of the programme

Target participants:

- Mentors: Individuals senior in career stage to the mentee, drawn from WG7 and the wider ENRICH Action
- Mentees: ENRICH ECRs (PhD students, postdocs, junior researchers)

Format:

- One-to-one meetings between mentor and mentee. Responsibility of organising meetings, taking notes and follow up is with the mentee.
- Minimum commitment is 2-3 meetings per year, with flexibility up to 4-6 depending on availability.
- The mentoring relationship will be objective-based, with goals defined at sign-up and agreed with the mentor. It will run for an initial period of 18 months, with the possibility of extension subject to mutual agreement.
- Two check-ins will be included:
 - An initial check-in: following the first mentoring meeting, mentors and mentees will be asked to confirm whether the match is appropriate.
 - A second check-in at 18 months to assess progress towards the objective and agree whether to conclude or extend the mentoring relationship.

Mentor preparation and guidance:

- Specific training of the mentors is deemed unachievable with the time and resources available within the Action.
- Instead, a collection of relevant documents and training resources will be signposted to mentors before the mentoring relationship starts.

- At the sign-up stage, previous mentoring and supervision experience of perspective mentors will be recorded and, if possible, mentors with previous experience will be preferred.

Sign up:

- Registration for both mentors and mentees will be conducted through dedicated Microsoft Forms.
- The call for mentors will remain continuously open throughout the duration of the programme, allowing experienced members to join at any time.
- The call for mentees will be opened on a quarterly basis, enabling periodic cohort-based matching and ensuring manageable intake and high-quality mentor–mentee alignment.

Matching and prioritisation:

- Matching will be based on the information provided by mentors and mentees at the sign-up stage, with the aim of achieving the closest possible alignment with their expressed preferences.
- In cases of high demand, prioritisation will be based on (i) the quality of the mentor–mentee match, as determined from the information provided at sign-up, and (ii) the ranking of mentee applications based on the motivation statement submitted as part of the application form.

Output and impact collection:

- For reporting purposes, mentees will be surveyed (short survey) yearly to collect the following information:
 - number of meetings had in the year
 - what was the most tangible impact of the mentoring scheme
- Possibility of also surveying mentors and mentees to gather feedback on the scheme and improve it

Code of conduct and safeguarding

Code of conduct

- We have prepared a dedicated code of conduct for this scheme, based on ESPID–WSPID Mentoring Programme framework and adapted for ENRICH, defining:
 - Core principles: respect, inclusivity, confidentiality, honesty, and professional integrity
 - Responsibilities of mentors and mentees
 - Mutual expectations around communication, goal setting, and conduct
 - Explicitly unacceptable behaviours (e.g. harassment, exploitation, breaches of trust)

- Mentors and mentees accept the code of conduct when they sign up to scheme.

Safeguarding

- The code of conduct clearly states the boundaries of the mentoring relationship and emphasis will be placed on this also in onboarding emails/kick-off meeting
- The requirement for confidentiality is clearly stressed in the code of conduct, and this should always be respected except when a risk to individuals is perceived
- We have identified a safeguarding workflow for when issues or concerns arise:
 - concerns and issues should be reported confidentially to the ENRICH Mentoring Committee, composed of Action Chair, Vice-Chair, WG7 Leader and co-Leader
 - The Committee will review the matter in confidence and determine appropriate next steps. Where a concern is assessed as serious, the Committee may escalate the issue to the relevant institution(s) of the mentor and/or mentee, having informed the individuals involved and sought their prior authorisation, except where immediate escalation is required for safeguarding reasons.