

## Widening Country Inspiration Story

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**Name of the fellow:** Manuele Bazzichetto

**Country of the host:** Czechia

**Project Acronym:** COCOS

**Project start and end date:** 10.10.2022 – 9.10.2024

**Type of MSCA, Horizon Europe:**  
Postdoctoral Fellowship



### What is your project about?

The intensity and frequency of extreme climatic events are increasing, with negative consequences for our society. In this context, COCOS aims at advancing our knowledge on how biodiversity supports ecosystems' response to extreme events. Understanding which biodiversity-related mechanism can enhance the ecosystem's capacity of withstanding extreme events is important to design future natural landscapes.

### Why is your project important for society?

Extreme climatic events are responsible for significant economic loss, impacting crucial sectors like food production that are vital for our welfare. Identifying which properties of ecosystems enhance their response to extreme events can help us mitigate their impacts.

### What communication and public engagement measures have you foreseen?

As part of COCOS, my communication strategy aimed at increasing public awareness about extreme events. For instance, I gave an interview to a local journal discussing COCOS' aims in light

of current concerns about climate change. I also participated in a joint symposium that brought together scientists, policy makers and environmental stakeholders. Such events offer an excellent venue to bridge the gap between science and policymaking.

### Why did you choose a widening country as a host?

There were both personal and practical reasons for my decision. During my PhD, I spent four months at my current host institution (Czech University of Life Sciences Prague) for a research stay, and I really enjoyed my time in Prague. I believed it was a good idea to return to Czechia to run my own project. From a practical point of view, there are reportedly more opportunities to secure funding if one applies to work in an organisation based in a widening country.

### How did you find your host organisation?

During my PhD, I did a research stay at my current host institution. This period was very fruitful, so it felt natural to return and run my project in Czechia. My supervisor had also established his lab there shortly before I decided to apply for the MSCA, so everything came naturally.

### What kind of support did you get?

Firstly, I relied on my supervisor's solid experience in project writing. He was awarded an MSCA fellowship in the past and has recently received an ERC grant. I also greatly benefited from exchanges with colleagues who have experience in project writing. Concerning the material, there are many guidelines and instructions available online that explain how to fill out the different sections of the MSCA proposal. This material, together with examples of successful proposals, helped me a lot in structuring my own project. Finally, linking the scientific aspects of the project with policies implemented within and outside Europe is crucial. In this respect, EU directives and reports are valuable sources of information.



### What tips can you give other researchers who would like to apply for MSCA?

Running an MSCA project is challenging, as there are many

scientific and non-scientific activities to implement throughout its duration. Therefore, it is important to rely on adequate support from both the supervisor and the administrative staff. My suggestion is to think strategically about where to apply. It is of utmost importance that the supervisor provides concrete support and that the administrative staff is competent. Both roles are crucial for the project to run smoothly.

More information on the project:



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The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF) enable talented researchers to work on project in Europe and beyond. They aim at enhancing the innovative potential of postdoctoral researchers through advanced trainings, international and intersectoral mobility.

The MSCA-NET project is the MSCA NCP project to facilitate the transnational cooperation to achieve a consistent and harmonised level of NCP support. The scientific community can also profit from our project to support their MSCA application.

