



Young European Associated Researchers

Annual Report 2019



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2019 has been an exciting year. We have maintained our core focus on promoting the development of professional skills and facilitating the international cooperation and exchange of knowledge among young researchers. We have revised our mission, intensified our external relations efforts, continued representation at EU level, and added an additional institution in the network.

YEAR strives to be proactive in preparing our members' young researchers for a successful career in research. As the Horizon 2020 funding program draws to a close next year, we adopted a strategic priority of preparing young researchers for Horizon Europe. To that end, we directed two of our two-day annual seminar events at providing the highest quality training on EU proposal writing. In spring, we brought 53 young researchers to Brussels. It was particularly inspiring to intensively study these topics in close proximity to the European Parliament, European Commission and so many other EU headquarters. Later in the autumn, we hosted a second excellent training in The Hague on "How to Write Impact in EU Proposals", which brought 30 young researchers together.

This year also brought a new and revitalised edition of our Annual Conference, co-organised and sponsored by RISE. It gathered more than 50 young researchers in Gothenburg, Sweden for a two-day workshop on innovative ideation focused on the United Nations Development Programme's Sustainable Development Goals. This year there was a big focus on team building and ideation through the process of pitching their ideas. It was wonderful to see the ideas form, grow and evolve into very interesting solutions.

2019 was a year for revising our vision, critically analysing the way the network is internally managed and the strategy to be followed in the future. The aim; to revamp our vision and mission, as well as our short- and long-term strategy according to the present challenges of the European Research Area, guaranteeing the growth and sustainability of the network.

At consultancy level, YEAR network remained part of the Open Science Policy Platform that has extended its mandate until 2020. Our role here is particularly notable as YEAR Network is the only young researcher network that has representation in the platform.

Finally, 2019 was a year of growth for the organisation, and we are delighted to announce Tyndall National Institute in Ireland coming on board. Our organisation aims for sustainable growth with relevant organisations who share our vision to develop and interconnect the leaders of the future.

2020 holds the promise of implementing our new mission and further increasing our impact to our member institutes and the community of young researchers in Europe

Colm Mc Caffrey
President, Young European Associated Researchers

2 YEAR VISION AND MISSION

2.1 WHO WE ARE

YEAR, the Young European Associated Researchers Network, is a non-profit organisation gathering young professionals from different Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) and Industrial Research Bodies (IRBs) across Europe. YEAR aims to support the career of young researchers, providing them with opportunities to increase their skills, spread their professional network and gain international experience.

2.2 OUR MEMBERS

At the end of 2019 the YEAR member organisations were:

- **AICIA** – Andalusian Association for Research and Industrial Cooperation (Spain)
- **AIT** – Austrian Institute of Technology (Austria)
- **RISE** – Research Institutes of Sweden (Sweden)
- **SINTEF** (Norway)
- **TNO** – Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (The Netherlands)
- **VITO** – Vlaamse instelling voor technologisch onderzoek (Belgium)
- **VTT** – Technical Research Centre of Finland (Finland)
- **TYNDALL** – Tyndall National Institute (Ireland)



2.3 OUR MISSION

The YEAR Network exists to support its member organisations by giving tailored opportunities to young researchers to develop their careers. We have a special emphasis on the internationalisation of research and we achieve our mission through the three following pillars:

1. **NETWORKING** across different fields of science and technology within an international context and supporting mobility initiatives of young researchers.
2. **TRAINING** through various events (topic specific seminars, webinars, workshops and the annual conference), dealing with key issues aiming to improve young professionals' skills within the European Research Area.
3. **CONSULTANCY** to represent the young European researchers on important and timely topics at the European Commission level.



“ YEAR provides a fantastic platform for Young Researcher development and strengthening of our European networks from the bottom up. ”

Antti Vasara

President & CEO

3 REPORT 2019

3.1 TYNDALL NATIONAL INSTITUTE - NEW YEAR MEMBER

2019 was a year of growth for YEAR. The latest new member is Tyndall National Institute, based in Ireland, joining the organisation in 2019. This will bring the number of institutional members to eight, and increase our reach to a base to approximately 4500 young researchers. YEAR is aiming at managed and sustainable growth, and we are always on the lookout for new research and technology organisation (RTO) members who can benefit most from our strategy and objectives, see Section 5 for more information on who can and how to become a YEAR member.



About Tyndall National Institute

Tyndall is a leading European research centre in integrated ICT (Information and Communications Technology) materials, devices and systems. It is one of Ireland's five National Labs, specialising in both electronics and photonics. Tyndall works with industry and academia to transform research into products in its core market areas of electronics, communications, energy, health, agri-tech & the environment. With a network of over 200 industry partners and customers worldwide, they are focused on delivering human and economic impact from excellence in research. A research flagship of University College Cork, Tyndall employs over 600 researchers, engineers and support staff across 52 nationalities, including a cohort of 120 full time graduate students.

Quotes:

“We are delighted to welcome Tyndall National Institute into YEAR. I am especially happy that my home country (Ireland) will be represented by Ireland’s leading research institute. As a past employee of Tyndall, I know there is a vibrant and ambitious base of young researchers there, and I am looking forward to their enriching YEAR.”

Colm Mc Caffrey – President of YEAR

“Tyndall is delighted to become a member of the YEAR network. As we significantly expand our organisation we are constantly looking for new and exciting ways to enhance the skills, confidence, experience and networks of our talented young researchers. We look forward to a strong and mutually beneficial partnership with YEAR.”

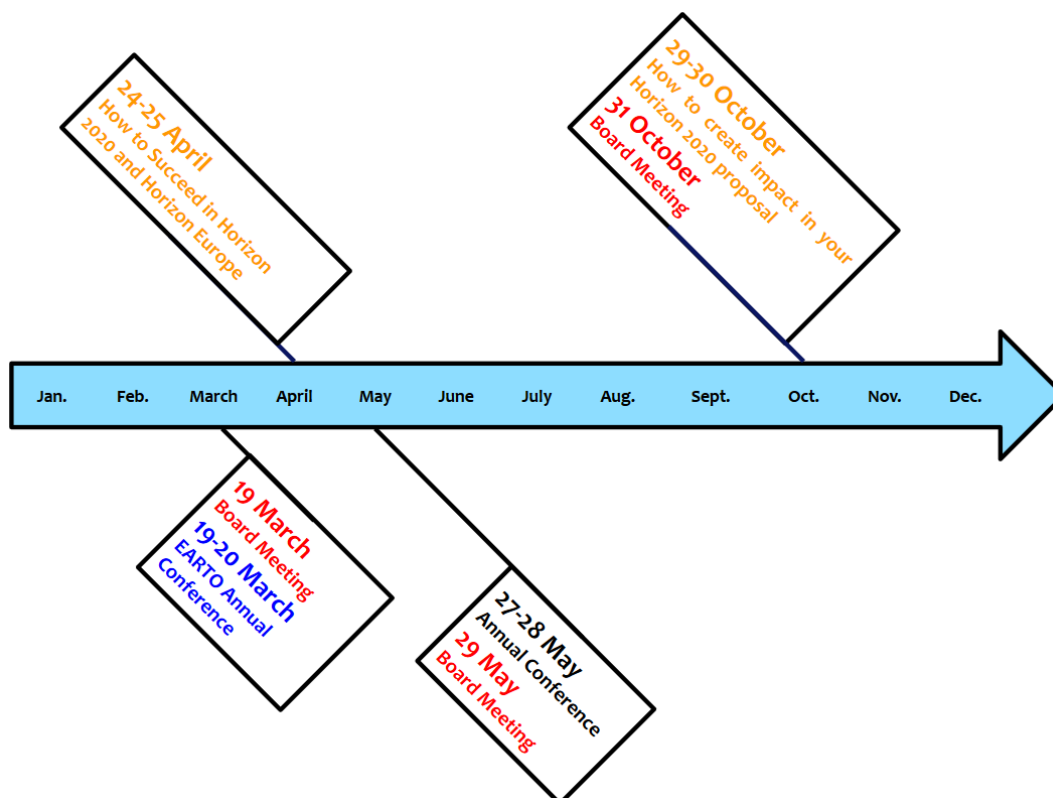
Tom O’Grady – Head of HR, Tyndall

3.2 ACTIVITIES

3.2.1 Summary of activities

During 2019, numerous events and activities were organised both at the member and network levels. As every year, YEAR organised its main networking event, the ‘Annual Conference’ with this year’s topic: ‘RISE to Innovation - Being a team player to bring your idea to life’. The Annual Conference was facilitated by professional trainers who helped the participants develop their ideas within a co-creational workshop format. In addition to the Annual Conference, YEAR continued organising successful webinars and several trainings and workshops. These trainings included two focusing on successful Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe proposals. Both trainings were facilitated by Seán Mc Carthy (Hypreion Ltd.). In addition, YEAR participated in the European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO) Annual Conference, hosted by VTT in Espoo, Finland on March 19-20, 2019. Furthermore, YEAR was consulted several times as a representative of the Young Researchers community and was invited to take part in different events in order to share its perspective on Open Science.

The timeline in the next page will chronologically sum up the activities made in 2019. The following pages detail the content and the outcomes of these events.



3.2.2 YEAR Annual Conference 2019: another successful edition

RISE and the YEAR Network organised the Annual Conference this year

The YEAR Annual Conference 2019 was held on May 27-28 and hosted by RISE Research Institutes of Sweden at their facilities in Gothenburg, Sweden. The event targeted young and early career researchers from YEAR member organisations. It provided networking opportunities and training for improving their interdisciplinary skills and developing novel project ideas.

RISE to Innovation - being a team player to bring your idea to life

In a two-day workshop, 48 young researchers were divided into seven interdisciplinary teams to develop novel research project ideas addressing the United Nations Development Programme's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The interactive format enabled them to develop ideas with co-creation methods and to practice pitching techniques.

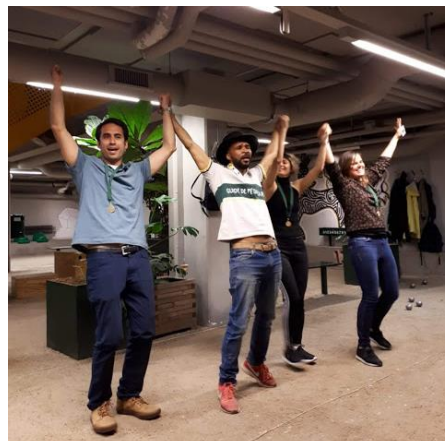


AC participants hard at work during the ideation phase (above) and a group photo at the conference (below).

The first day of the conference began with a presentation by Johanna Berlin, Head of Strategic initiatives at RISE, followed by a presentation by Josefina Sallén, head of Sustainable Business at RISE, on Sustainable Development Challenges. The conference then continued with an “Ideation Workshop” focused on societal impact and the SDGs. The participants developed and refined their innovative ideas to respond to the global challenges throughout the day. Day two focused on experimentation and idea presentation to the groups.

Social Weekend

Before the kick-off of the Annual Conference, the participants had the opportunity to attend the Social Weekend. During the weekend, thirty of the conference participants explored Gothenburg and the archipelago together following the social programme organised by the local hosts. Some highlights included the walking tour of the city, trying traditional Swedish “fika”, some games of pétanque and a boat trip and visit Brännö, an island off the coast of Gothenburg.



Group photo taken from the pont-of-view outside Masthugg Church (left) and the winning team from the pétanque tournament (right).

Feedback

Before closing the conference, we asked all participants to provide feedback on various aspects of the conference. Overall, feedback of participants was positive (about 40% rated AC “very good” and ~60% as “good”). All the participants would recommend the event to colleagues and fellow young researchers. Nearly all responders assessed organisational aspects as “very good” or “good”. The quality and support of the trainers were rated as “very good” by the majority of the participants. One area of improvement was identified as the “duration/length of the sessions” by the participants. This feedback will be taken into consideration for the 2020 Annual Conference.

3.2.3 Trainings

Two face-to-face trainings were organised in 2019. YEAR and SINTEF organised the first training: “How to succeed in Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe?” on April 24-25, 2019. This training gathered 53 young and early-career researchers from YEAR member organisations at SINTEF’s Brussels office to listen and learn from Seán Mc Carthy (Hyperion Ltd.) and Deepak Pant (VITO). S. Mc Carthy focused on (i) “How to Write a Competitive Proposal for Horizon 2020?” and “Getting Ready for Horizon Europe”. D. Pant focused on “How to Build a Strong EU Consortium” and “Getting into the Head of the Reviewer When Preparing an EU Proposal”.

YEAR and TNO organised the second training: “How to Create Impact in Your Horizon 2020 Proposal”. The training brought together 30 participants from YEAR member organisations in The Hague, Netherlands for an exciting two-day training on October 29-30, 2019. Seán Mc Carthy provided training and advice to improve the participants’ existing skills sets concerning (i) how to present research activities to business executives, public officials, politicians and other scientists and (ii) how to write the “Impact” of a Horizon 2020 proposal (Pillar II and Pillar III). The training ended with a session from professional speaker Chris Baldwin on “Presenting and Pitching and the Art of Giving an Effective Presentation”.

3.2.4 Consultancy

Activities conducted under the pillar “Consultancy” enabled YEAR to increase its visibility as the “voice” of young European researchers. Consequently, the Board was invited to present their views and perspectives at different occasions.

3.1.3.1. Open Science Policy Platform

The mandate of the European Open Science Policy Platform (OSPP) was extended until May 2020. Since May 2018, Jan Rörden (AIT) acted as the representative of YEAR in this board, with Alexis Sevault (SINTEF) as proxy. Michela Vignoli (AIT) stepped down from representing YEAR at European level.

In total, three OSPP meetings took place in 2019, whose highlights are given below:

- 30 January 2019, Brussels: The meeting was attended by Jean-Eric Paquet - Director General of DG RTD. J-E. Paquet stressed the importance of Open Science for European Science. The OSPP experts reviewed several expert group reports and the Roadmaps for Indicators for Open Science and Citizen Science.
- 12 April 2019, Bucharest: The OSPP discussed the “Indicators for Engagement with Open Science” as a response to the expert group report on Indicators, as well as the need to focus more on primary actors for Open Science implementation and to define Open Science success criteria.
- 22 October 2019, Helsinki: The OSPP discussed the definition of good citizen science practices as well as the practical implementation of open science in European University networks.

More information and documentation about the OSPP can be found on the European Commission website: <https://ec.europa.eu/research/openscience/index.cfm?pg=open-science-policy-platform>

3.1.3.2. Stakeholder Consultation on Research Infrastructures

On April 11th, 2019, YEAR participated in the stakeholder consultation under the topic “Research Infrastructures (RI) – the Future of the European Research Area (ERA) from a Regional and Cross-border Perspective” organised by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR). The result of our participation in a position paper highlighting the perspective of young researchers and providing specific strategies to support their involvement. On October 9th, 2019, the CoR adopted a number of policy recommendations as a result of the contributions of the stakeholders that attended the consultation.

The position paper is available on the Publications Office of the European Union: <https://op.europa.eu/s/n2GB>

3.2.5 EARTO Conference

YEAR participated in the EARTO Annual Conference, hosted by VTT in Espoo, Finland on March 19-20, 2019. EARTO brings together over 350 research and technology organisations in Europe from twenty-three countries. YEAR had a booth at the conference that highlighted the pillars of YEAR, along with the activities and support YEAR can provide to young and early-career researchers - including the YEAR “Wheel of Impact”.

Conference attendees were invited to spin the Wheel of Impact, which highlighted what young researchers “bring to” and “expect from” to their organisation. This attracted high levels of attention and initiated some fantastic conversations about the important role of young researchers in research and technology organisations with RTO representatives from across Europe.



YEAR Board Members at the EARTO conference (left) and the YEAR Wheel of Impact (right).

3.3 BOARD MEETINGS

Three face-to-face board meetings were organised in 2019 to define the main orientations and prepare the planned activities of the network. They were held in combination with the EARTO Annual Conference (March 2019), the YEAR Annual Conference (May 2019) and the training hosted by TNO (October 2019). The aims of these meetings were to gather at least one representative per member organisation and to take representative decisions. Decisions were discussed and voted unanimously. If additional clarification of some points is necessary, a teleconference was scheduled. The main objectives of these meetings were to:

- Prepare the Annual Conference (main topic, dates of the event, potential speakers to be invited, organisation of the social weekend)
- Define the topics, schedule and host of the upcoming webinars, seminars and workshops
- Evaluation of the visibility of the communication channels/improvement of the communication material
- Enlargement of the network: potential new members
- Interactions with the EU: increase the visibility of YEAR towards the European Commission; get contacts to support our actions
- Finances

3.4 COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

YEAR continued its communication strategy this year. Communication within the research organisations was conducted by the board members as representatives of their RTO. The Young networks, present at the respective RTOs, are very important for the internal promotion of the events arranged by YEAR. As for the external communication, webpages, LinkedIn and Twitter were used to inform the followers about the YEAR

events. Our LinkedIn group "YEAR Network – Young European Associated Researchers" is especially successful with more than 1,100 members. In total, our network brings together a potential of about 4,500 young researchers in Europe.

The communication strategy will be continuously updated according to the needs of the network. The main goals remain the improvement of the visibility and attractiveness of YEAR and the support of its growth.

YEAR enhanced its outreach communication strategy in 2018. One board member undertook an intensive one-day workshop with a professional communication consultant. The goal was to sharpen the key messages YEAR would want to bring to an audience of RTO Executive decision makers and make an attractive pitch 'story'. The presentation materials were revamped, and the strategy of introducing YEAR to high profile audiences was the focus.

3.4.1 Communication Tools and Data Storage

At the November 2018 board meeting, a significant amount of discussion focused on improving the technology used for communication, both within the YEAR board and in communications with member organisations. Based upon these discussions, in 2019, G-Suite, for emailing and document management/storage, and Slack, for communication were adopted. Each board member has their own personal "name@year-network.com" email address for official YEAR communications and access to a shared Google Drive where all official documents are organised, stored and managed. Slack is being used as the primary platform for real time board communications and planning, and linked to G-Suite for file sharing and teleconferencing. In addition, Slack was also used at the 2019 Annual Conference to facilitate inter-team communications and discussions prior to, during, and following the conference.

3.5 FINANCES

YEAR gets its funding through the YEAR membership fees. The YEAR membership fee is calculated for each member institute, based on a nominal 5€ per employee fee, with a minimum and maximum fee of 800€ and 6 000€, respectively. A 15% discount applies when the member institute runs an internal network of young researchers.

Since 2013, YEAR Network has significantly invested in the organisation of different events with a solid budget dedicated to the Annual Conference and the YEAR Award. It should be mentioned that each member organisation also allocates significant internal resources for supporting the participation and organisation of YEAR events. It is also of first importance for the board to reasonably use the resources available. In that sense, board meetings, for instance, are organised in parallel to other YEAR activities in order to reduce the travel costs. In 2019, YEAR launched the YEAR Trainings as a new type of activity. Additional costs were linked to the trainings, first due to the logistics costs, but also to hire reputed professional trainers to provide top quality trainings for our members. A summary of 2019 transactions can be found below.

Bank account balance on 01.01.2019	43 475.20 €
Membership fees 2019	+29 923.25 €
Board meetings	-3 175.33 €
YEAR Annual Conference (sponsored by RISE)	-16 657.49 €
External relations & EU affairs activities	-5 415.12 €
Training and webinar costs	-12 425.05 €
Bank, hosting address and accounting costs	-3 650.85 €
Other costs (website, annual report, webinar solution, etc.)	-1 004.59 €
Bank account balance on 31.12.2018	31 070.02 €

4 EXECUTIVE BOARD

4.1 COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

In 2019, the YEAR Board was composed as follows:



Colm
Mc Caffrey
(VTT)
President



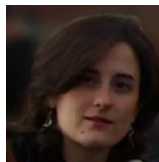
Johanna
Björkmalm
(RISE)
Treasurer



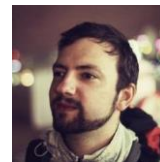
Alexis Sevault
(SINTEF)
External
Relations



Jef
Bergmans
(VITO)
Vice-president



Clara Lujan
(AICIA)
European Affairs



Simon Gunkel
(TNO)
Technology
Manager



Caitlin
Huotilainen
(VTT)
Secretary
General



Mike
Wilmer
(TNO)
Communications



Michela
Vignoli
(AIT)
Communications



Behrooz
Sangchoolie
(RISE)
Event
Manager



Salvatore
Tedesco
(Tyndall)
Member



Anahid
Jalali
(AIT)
Member

All member organisations have at least one board member, ensuring a voice for all YEAR Network members.

4.2 CONTACT DETAILS

YEAR
36-38 rue Joseph II
1000 Bruxelles, Belgium

e-mail: contact@year-network.com

website: www.year-network.com

twitter: @year-network

LinkedIn: YEAR Network - Young European Associated Researchers

5 BECOME A MEMBER

5.1 WHO CAN BECOME A MEMBER?

Any RTO or Research and Development departments of industrial organisations established in member countries of the European Union or of the European Economic Area who is willing to support the career of its young researchers can become a YEAR member. YEAR activities are specially intended for **young-minded people**; therefore, there is no age limit to participation.

An internal network of young researchers is not required for an institution to become a member. Nevertheless, and according to YEAR's experience, an organised internal platform or group of young researchers helps to both increase the visibility and efficiency of YEAR; as young people feel more directly concerned.

5.2 WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

Considering the three pillars of YEAR - networking, training and consulting, the following advantages arise from a YEAR membership:

- **Frequent networking opportunities** with young researchers from all over Europe to get to know and find research partners, exchange experiences, develop new ideas, etc.
- **Yearly event with a fine-tuned education programme** for young researchers on proposal writing, European programmes, interdisciplinary training, mobility opportunities, etc.
- **Topic specific seminars, workshops and webinars** where experts from each member institution have the opportunity to talk about their research, establish new collaborations and share their questions and concerns with members of the European Commission or other important personalities linked to the development and financing of research.
- Opportunities of **young researcher exchanges** between two member organisations or assisting researchers in the process of getting funding for an exchange.
- Assistance in formalising an internal network of young researchers.
- Assistance to develop initiatives around the YEAR pillars.

5.3 HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER?

Contact us at contact@year-network.com and we will guide you through the steps. We have elaborated a simple, clear and efficient process diminishing the administrative burden.



Year