

# Net4Mobility<sup>+</sup>



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Network of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions National Contact Points for the mobile scientific and innovation community

### MSCA Success Stories from Organisations in Widening Countries

Task 4.4      Effective MSCA promotion

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**Host organization: GENOS**

**Country: Croatia**

**Organization role: Beneficiary/ WP leader/ Task leader**

**Project Acronym: GlyCoCan**

**Project start and end date: 1 September 2015 – 31 August 2019**

**Type of MSC action, H2020: ITN**



More pictures at <https://glycocan.eu/>.

### **Your story:**

#### **Project objectives and research field:**

The objective of GlyCoCan is to conduct basic research in the field of glycobiology that might lead to the improved diagnostics and treatment of colorectal cancer. With this scientific aim, the project has a strong focus on training the participating ESRs to become glycosylation researchers with an interdisciplinary perspective of academic and industrial environment.

#### **Tell us why the topic is important and/ or how it brings to advancement in your research field:**

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is a major worldwide cancer burden with about 1.4 million cases in 2012 and an annual mortality of approximately 700,000. Early detection is crucial as treatment is most efficient in early stages where population based screenings could substantially reduce incidence and mortality. Current screening

techniques are invasive or lack sensitivity and specificity. Moreover, the molecular mechanisms leading to the formation of different antigens suggested as CRC biomarkers and potential therapeutic targets are poorly understood, especially with regard to carbohydrate-based molecules, such as glycans. Enhancing our understanding of the structure-function relationship of glycosylation in CRC could lead to the discovery of improved diagnostic and prognostic biomarkers and pave the way for novel therapeutic targets. GlyCoCan aims to develop new methods, and use current state of the art methods, to investigate the role of glycosylation in many different aspects of CRC.

### **What are the benefits of participating in an MSC action?**

The GlyCoCan multi-disciplinary network is principally a training programme with a substantial industrial focus on technology transfer and teaching of internationally adopted biopharma regulations. The underlying specific research objectives are addressed within individual ESR projects, giving rise to a generation of ESRs whose main focus is investigating and tackling the challenges of the role of glycosylation within CRC and other diseases. The network addresses the currently unmet need for glycosylation researchers with an inter-disciplinary perspective to fully exploit the immense potential of the young scientific field of glyco-oncology and to set them on a path to successful and productive careers in academic and industrial collaborations.

### **Did you encounter any challenges during application/ implementation and did you get any help?**

Most problems were of bureaucratic nature – e.g. visa requirements for some ESRs required us to change secondment timing and adjust the research plan. We got as much help as we could from NCPs but there is not much they could do really. They were always helpful sharing the necessary info though.

### **Would you recommend others to apply? What useful advice/ tips can you give them?**

Definitely. It is a very valuable learning and networking experience, for both PIs and ESRs. I think we all grew significantly from both scientific and personal aspects during the project.

### **What strategies did your organization use to attract the fellow/s? Are they in line with national strategies supporting the widening EC policy?**

Croatia itself belongs to the group of “low R&I performing” or “widening” EU countries so our participation supports the widening EC policy. In addition, both ESRs we employed through the project are citizens of EU Associated Countries (Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia).

