

Online questionnaire for the Green Paper on a common strategic framework for EU research and innovation funding.

http://ec.europa.eu/research/csfri/index_en.cfm

This European Commission **Green Paper** proposes major changes to EU research and innovation funding to make participation easier, increase scientific and economic impact and provide better value for money. The questions are the same as those set out in the Green Paper. To facilitate responding, you are asked to rate the relative importance of the aspects covered in each of the questions. Text responses are limited to 1500 characters. If you wish to provide detailed written comments you are encouraged to use the written response submission form.

Working together to deliver on Europe 2020

The questions in this section correspond to Section 4.1 of the Green Paper.

1. How should the Common Strategic Framework make EU research and innovation funding more attractive and easy to access for participants? What is needed in addition to a single entry point with common IT tools, a one stop shop for support, a streamlined set of funding instruments covering the full innovation chain and further steps towards administrative simplification?

There are already many suggestions which have been made in the green paper. Focus has to be put on practical issues like faster time to contract, less bureaucracy (e.g. less strict time sheets) etc. New instruments should be avoided whereas more flat rates and common rules for all programmes/calls are welcome. Furthermore, EC-Application documents (Workprogrammes, forms, PartB etc.) should follow the same structure and logic. This is especially relevant for Joint Calls with more topics / cross thematic topics where more than one workprogramme needs to be screened.

2 How should EU funding best cover the full innovation cycle from research to market uptake?

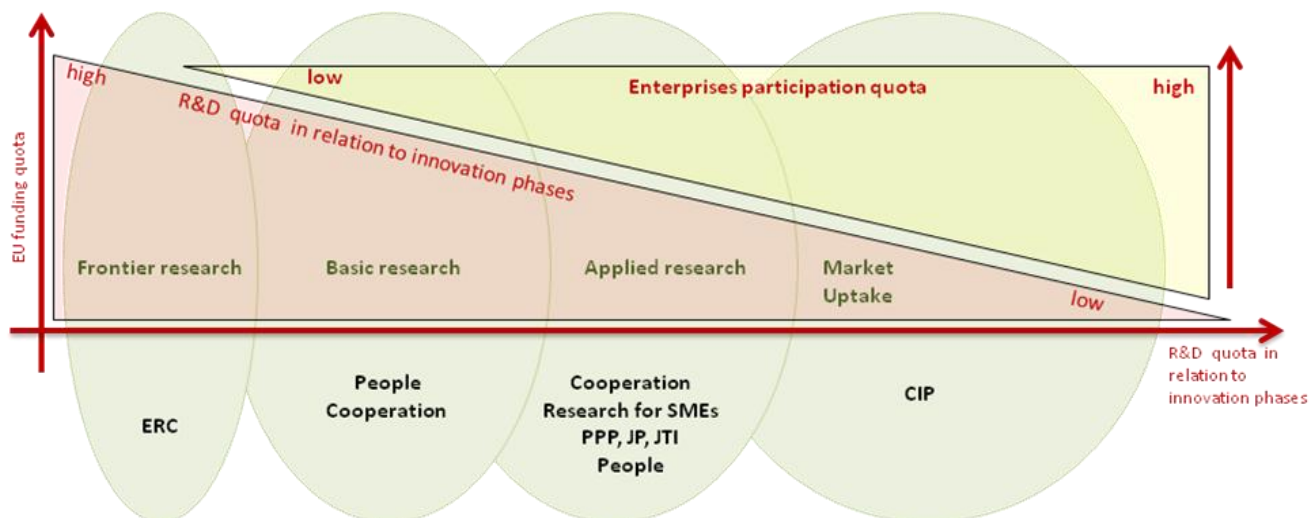
The overall goal should be to streamline the different instruments along the innovation cycle and use the relevant instruments that suit best for the step of development that is necessary, e.g. IDEAS and ERC for Basic Research or Collaborative Projects for Applied Research

There is still a missing link between the transition from basic research to applied research and the other phases until market introduction. Projects often fail to seriously care about the next phase in the innovation cycle due to the missing obligation, consortium or skills etc.

Exploitation Plans should be part of every EU-funded (also ERC projects but with different aspects of course) project; therefore a broadened industry support across the full innovation cycle (from proof of concept until pre-normative research for standard setting and IPR issues) is important. Incentives could be used for projects which provide and implement well thought out exploitation steps.

It is obviously not possible to have the same consortium in every part of the innovation cycle, therefore the EC has to care about a framework which brings good ideas to the next step and finally until market uptake. The Enterprise Europe Network is an (obligatory) instrument for implementation or dissemination for any EU-funded project especially for already market relevant results.

Finally, the closer projects come to the market, the more regional/national instruments, maybe complemented with European co-funding should apply.



3. What are the characteristics of EU funding that maximise the benefit of acting at the EU level? Should there be a strong emphasis on leveraging other sources of funding?

There are many benefits like a high funding rate, shared risk for difficult research questions, easy way to network/partnerships, access to different markets etc. Further funding instruments might be useful as long as they are simple and financially interesting.

4. How should EU research and innovation funding be used to pool Member States' research and innovation resources? Should Joint Programming Initiatives between groups of Member States be supported?

Joint Programming should avoid parallel EU and national funding for similar topics. However, it only concerns groups of Member States and actually is another additional instrument with own and maybe new rules. FP7 rules are well known now (still to be simplified) and should partly be applied to any funding programme, preferably also at national/regional level. Joint Programming can contribute to develop the idea of smart specialisation at regional/national level but should apply existing funding rules.

5. What should be the balance between smaller, targeted projects and larger, strategic ones?

Especially SME prefer small, short and well focused projects with reasonable time to contract and fast outputs. Otherwise they only serve as “cosmetic” partners in order to increase funding chances. However, strategic challenges can only be solved with long term instruments.

6. How could the Commission ensure the balance between a unique set of rules allowing for radical simplification and the necessity to keep a certain degree of flexibility and diversity to achieve objectives of different instruments, and respond to the needs of different beneficiaries, in particular SMEs?

Simplification should include “wide” definitions which automatically allow flexibility to a certain degree. Flat rates for indirect costs, travels or categories for personal costs should be possible. Time records should be less strict, according to FP6 (e.g. 1680 productive hours for all) Output should be more important as indicator than input.

7. What should be the measures of success for EU research and innovation funding? Which performance indicators could be used?

We agree to the indicators published in the final report of the expert group from October 15th, 2009.

However, an additional “exploitation indicator” should be introduced. In each project, where an exploitation plan is well prepared and realistic for implementation (e.g. follow up project in the next phase of the innovation cycle), the indicator is “positive” or “fulfilled”. Exploitation for ERC projects is of course different then for applied projects.

Exploitation-Indicator of each phase could be: Output, publications, % of ERC project with “market” potential.

As a next step, the Venture Capital Approach could be applied: only if requirements are fulfilled, then funding is justified or continued (see Qu.2)

8. How should EU research and innovation funding relate to regional and national funding? How should this funding complement funds from the future Cohesion policy, designed to help the less developed regions of the EU, and the rural development funds?

We welcome the approach of smart specialisation where regions need to find their ‘market niches’ that have the potential to produce quick results in global markets and to address the social challenges they face. This could be financed by cohesion funding, where relevant.

Concerning projects in general, there should be more cooperation between regional/national/European programmes. Promising projects which start at regional level should “easily” continue with national and European funding if they have enough potential for growing. Smooth transition between the phases should be guaranteed.

In order to allow certain simplicity and a high degree of qualitative advice, participants should be accompanied by experienced organisations/consultants, acting as one stop shop and based on a non-profit principle.

Tackling Societal Challenges

The questions in this section correspond to Section 4.2 of the Green Paper.

9. How should a stronger focus on societal challenges affect the balance between curiosity-driven research and agenda-driven activities?

Societal challenges should always be on top of priorities and be agenda-driven, about 80% of budget. However, bottom up activities should continue with about 20%.

10. Should there be more room for bottom-up activities?

We welcome the current activities for bottom-up activities in FP7 (ICT-FET, Ideas, SME). However, actions like NEST in FP6 which leave enough creative space for breakthrough ideas are still missing.

11. How should EU research and innovation funding best support policy-making and forward-looking activities?

The JRC with its 2750 employees is officially in charge of customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of EU policies. (JRC Strategy 2010-2020)

However, there is still space for own programs and calls which deal with policy making

12. How should the role of the Commission's Joint Research Centre be improved in supporting policy-making and forward-looking activities?

N.N.

13. How could EU research and innovation activities attract greater interest and involvement of citizens and civil society?

The dialogue between science and society is still very weak. The perception of research and researchers is also unsatisfying. There are already good practices which successfully promote research results to the public, e.g. EUREKA is making its results visible through different practical examples. Another way could be to bring "Researchers back to school", where successful scientists visit their former schools and actively present their careers.

Strengthening competitiveness

The questions in this section correspond to Section 4.3 of the Green Paper.

14. How should EU funding best take account of the broad nature of innovation, including non-technological innovation, eco-innovation and social innovation?

Grand challenges (energy, climate-change, ageing) should be on top of all programmes. Within FP7 there are already topics which include different aspects of innovation and open programmes like People or Ideas leave space for any topic. However, non-technological research projects might have more budget within the new CSF as there are still research departments which have no access to funding programmes. For topics which arise in the short run, bottom up programmes have to be continued.

15. How should industrial participation in EU research and innovation programmes be strengthened? How should Joint Technology Initiatives (such as those launched in the current Framework Programmes) or different forms of 'public private partnership' be supported? What should be the role of European Technology Platforms?

Private companies need fast and flexible implementation schemes as well as attractive, market relevant ideas. PPP and JTI shall therefore be continued with the need to harmonize rules and administrative requirements. However, there is still space for more open implementation schemes especially for SME.

16. How and what types of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) should be supported at EU level; how should this complement national and regional level schemes? What kind of measures should be taken to decisively facilitate the participation of SMEs in EU research and innovation programmes?

SME with innovation capacity and willingness to grow and cooperate should be targeted. A combination with national/regional funding schemes can only work if it is a kind of regional bonus in addition to EC funding. Generally, simple application and implementation procedures are essential for SME. Continuously open calls with fast funding decisions may attract SME with good and market relevant ideas.

17 How should open, light and fast implementation schemes (e.g. building on the current FET actions and CIP eco-innovation market replication projects) be designed to allow flexible exploration and commercialisation of novel ideas, in particular by SMEs?

They should be continuously open, have simple funding rules and especially a low degree of administrative burdens, e.g. with lump sums or flat rates.

18. How should EU-level financial instruments (equity and debt based) be used more extensively?

Funding rates for FP7 are already quite high, however there might be a need to finance the remaining part. Especially for projects with a high degree of investment costs (machines, equipment, demonstration costs), other instruments should be provided. Also the follow-up for market development is to be financed with loans, guarantees ect.

19. Should new approaches to supporting research and innovation be introduced, in particular through public procurement, including through rules on pre-commercial procurement, and/or inducement prizes?

It should be common use that public companies should participate as demonstrators wherever relevant and possible. This way they could serve as test user and test the technological results of research projects. Therefore, relating rules have to be changed. However, it has to be secured, that the quality and cost of public services is not influenced negatively through respective regulations. This applies especially for services relevant to security and health.

20. How should intellectual property rules governing EU funding strike the right balance between competitiveness aspects and the need for access to and dissemination of scientific results?

In order to emphasize the competitiveness aspects, the companies taking part in EU projects shall be given the chance to check early enough, whether foreground produced jointly or only by the scientific partner(s) in the project is patentable, and whether a patent application fits to their IPR strategy. Yet, a procedure with obligatory clearance procedures before publishing and fixed response times of the addressed project partners shall be set up between the companies and scientific partners. If a company is then going to apply for a patent, publication has to be delayed till the application is done, but the application shall proceed as quickly as possible. Access and dissemination should then be assured by allowing and even requiring publication of the results, yet with crucial details to be exempted from early publications if companies have good reasons to do so – but only a limited delay (e.g. max. 1 year) shall be accepted for know-how not being patented but considered as secret know-how by the company project partner(s).

Strengthening Europe's science base and the European Research Area

The questions in this section correspond to Section 4.4 of the Green Paper.

21. How should the role of the European Research Council be strengthened in supporting world class excellence ?

We welcome the position of the Austrian Ministry of Science :

ERC has proved to be a **successful instrument** in the 7th Framework Programme. The ERC is exclusively orientated towards scientific excellence, it refrains from having thematic priorities set from outside, and it funds individuals, therefore the ERC is regarded as the most innovative part of the 7th Framework Programme. However, we have also seen that both a high performance national science landscape as well a matching R&D expenditure remain indispensable preconditions for the successful participation of member states in the ERC programmes. This can be seen from successful countries such as the Netherlands or Sweden, but also from non-EU member states such as Switzerland and Israel. The Austrian performance in the ERC roughly corresponds to the financial framework that Austria provides (fictitiously) for the ERC (PROVISO 2010). Austria therefore advocates for all fields of science, including their interdisciplinary issues, to be supported by the ERC. This also includes research in the field of the arts within the domain of "Social Sciences and Humanities".

Supplementary measures should also be taken within the third pillar, for example

- such measures as under the current Marie Curie funding measures for individual researchers, or
- continuing unimpeded access for ERC "Principal Investigators" to high-performance research infrastructures in Europe,
- building up a strategic partnership between the Joint Research Centre and the ERC, in order to use outstanding achievements at the ERC for the seven core thematic areas of the JRC,
- funding branches of excellent research institutions in the convergence regions of Europe,
- improving the perception of the ERC in all parts of the world, in order to support the attractiveness of the ERC for international top researchers.

21. How should the role of the European Research Council be strengthened in supporting world class excellence ?

Even though ERC grants /projects shall be already simpler to apply and to carry out, the researchers face still lots of administrative barriers and very long time to contract. The evaluation procedures of ERC seem to be quite fair, but last too long. Thus instruments shall be developed that allow very fast evaluation procedure and simpler contracts.

22. How should EU support assist Member States in building up excellence?

Long term visions: after short and fast evaluation of ERC-project outcomes (at least 6 months before the project ends!?) there should be clear possibilities to support following excellent projects of the ERC grantees. The excellent researchers should have the possibility to apply anytime for further financial support and do not be dependent on deadlines once per year. This will help to maintain continuity on excellent research and lower the "organizational" effort for the excellent researchers thus allowing them to concentrate on their research work.

23. How should the role of Marie Curie Actions be strengthened in promoting researcher mobility and developing attractive careers?

Most of the young researchers (PhDs, early Postdocs up to 5 years after PhD) are quite aware that fix positions at research institutions are rather rare and that they need to find funding for their further employment by themselves. 2 years funding provided by Marie Curie could be in some cases (IEF, IIF) thus too short since the researcher has to integrate into the host organization, concentrate on the research work and at the same time – latest after 6 months of being abroad – search for the funding after his mobility period. Therefore there should be possibility to apply for at least 3 years projects within the actions like IEF or IIF. In addition there could be a panel within Marie Curie actions for career development within the industry. This will strengthen the visibility of researcher career path with industry. Research projects in industry shall compete solely with other projects from industry and not with (in many cases) more excellent projects carried out at typical research institutions. Moreover there should be some instruments (at national level?) that researchers who take part in Marie Curie actions have better possibilities to get a stable position when competing with other researchers comparable in terms of excellence.

Social security is still a big topic. It should be discussed if there could be some European wide instruments (European wide pension fund for the researchers?) to guarantee social security of mobile researchers.

24. What actions should be taken at EU level to further strengthen the role of women in science and innovation?

Motivation for career in science shall already begin with the primary/secondary schools. Here specific motivational activities like “girls day”, pilot projects during secondary education dealing with science and involving mainly girls could be a partly solution. Further, special contribution to be able to finance child care facilities – also while being mobile researcher should be possible; Lots of women researchers have to give up their careers because their partners get a stable position and there is no equivalent funding for them at the same institution /town. Thus dual career-path support/funding shall be available.

25. How should research infrastructures (including EU-wide e-Infrastructures) be supported at EU level?

Infrastructures which serve strategic needs which are common for all or most European countries are of course to be implemented at Community level. This allows cost sharing and a higher degree of utilization of expensive laboratories and their equipment.

26. How should international cooperation with non-EU countries be supported e.g. in terms of priority areas of strategic interest, instruments, reciprocity (including on IPR aspects) or cooperation with Member States?

Generally, international cooperation should be strengthened with countries with a high potential in RTD and business (India, China etc.). Another point could be that (short 1-2 months) periods of mobility are a requirement within typical cooperation projects. This might help to strengthen co-operations as such and ease common strategic interest through better knowledge of the cooperating institutions.

27 Which key issues and obstacles concerning the ERA should EU funding instruments seek to overcome, and which should be addressed by other (e.g. legislative) measures?

IPR, harmonization of social security systems (especially for participants of mobility programmes) are important questions to be discussed and decided by legislative bodies.