

NET4SOCIETY Green Paper answer components

Suggestions for answers to selected questions of the EU consultation on the Green Paper *"From Challenges to opportunities – towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU research and innovation funding"*

It is important that a large number of answers reflect SSH perspectives. **Contributions of organisations, however, will be weighed as more important than individual responses. It is therefore decisive, that – in addition to your individual response – you motivate your organisation to submit a response that includes the SSH perspective as well.**

For participating in the consultation the following aspects are important to keep in mind:

- Please **slightly modify** the NET4SOCIETY answer components when you use them. Identical answers might be counted only once. You may chose different answer components, leave out others, add additional ideas.
- Not all questions need to be answered. **Questions 11, 14 and 2** are of particular importance from an SSH view.
- Our answer suggestions for Q11 include a suggestion for a **“Societal Challenge: Understanding Europe in a Global Context”** as a future SSH part of the programme.
- It is advisable to give concrete suggestions with regard to future budgets and themes.
- Answers in the online consultation are **limited to 1500 characters**. The NET4SOCIETY suggestions for some questions contain more characters all in all. In that case, if you want to use the answer components you should concentrate on the components that are the most important in your view.
- As different units within the EC will be responsible for the analysis of different questionnaire parts, cross-references between your answers to different questions are not advisable.

The Green Paper consultation on the Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding will be open until 20 May 2011 and can be accessed here:

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

4.1 Working together to deliver on Europe 2020

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?

- In the context of Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) the success rates are currently too low to guarantee the participation of excellent researchers in the long-run. A large number of proposals with high evaluation scores remain without funding due to budgetary constraints. An increased budget for aspects of socio-economic sciences and humanities is therefore necessary.
- Transparent funding decisions throughout all evaluation stages particularly concerning the ranking of proposals with identical scores in all evaluation criteria.
- Reliable roadmaps are very useful and could help to prepare well-targeted project ideas.
- Time-to-grant should be reduced.

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

- The Common Strategic Framework should lay down and consistently use a definition of innovation that includes social innovation and societal aspects of innovation processes.
- Stronger emphasis on user integration, not only in the research but also in strategic decisions of setting funding priorities. This includes the public sector and civil society organisations.
- The understanding of innovation processes and the societal processes that accompany innovation needs to be strengthened by fostering SSH research in these areas.

- Applied research requires basic research as a foundation – the full cycle needs to include elements that are not immediately market-oriented.

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?

- Collaborative research projects maximise the benefit of acting at the EU level in terms of complementarities of perspectives (increase the quality of research results), overcoming fragmentation, knowledge transfer, combining resources, comparative studies.
- The benefits of EU-wide collaborative research projects are particularly important for a number of SSH issues that can only be tackled on a European level.
- At least 60% of the budget of available funding should be reserved for collaborative research.
- Leveraging other sources: There should not be a strong emphasis on this aspect, as this discourages cooperation with countries that only have small or no national research funding programmes.
- If instruments for leveraging other sources are used, ERA-Nets would be the right approach.

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?

- Support to JPIs should only be granted in case of the implementation of a mechanism that allows researchers from countries that are not member of the JPI consortium to participate and receive funding.
- Before further supporting JPIs, a comprehensive evaluation of the pilot JPI is necessary.

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

- Both types of projects are needed. The project size should suit the objectives of the research topic and the expected impact. The major focus, however, should be on small and medium-scale targeted projects.
- More than one project per topic should be funded to ensure a variety of perspectives.
- We need a balanced set of correct tools for the right questions, but it is important to stress that giving priority to smaller instruments does not automatically mean “less strategic”.
- The small projects offer the possibility of studying in-depth a specific issue and produce results that are often both academically more sound and policy-wise more relevant and better to implement.
- Large consortia are usually in need of significant administrative efforts.
- Measures should be foreseen to foster the cooperation between small and medium scale projects that address similar themes.
- The possibility for small projects to evolve into larger projects should be foreseen.

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?

- There should be no contradiction or any special challenge for the matching of the simplification and standardisation with the flexibility and diversity of partners involved. “Simpler” should also mean “more flexible”.
- Issues of inconsistency in interpretation and implementation of rules should be addressed, as well as genuine differences in procedures, rules, terminology and definitions.
- Appointment of an Ombudsman for Research and Innovation, who would provide a decision in cases where there are significant differences in interpretation and understanding.
- Implementation of a more trust-based approach based on good practice in each Member State, including increasing the tolerable risk of error.
- There is a further need for a standardisation of approach across the Framework Programmes, CIP and other EU funding streams to have a common framework of participation rules and funding quota and regulations.
- The funding regulations for CSOs/NGOs cannot be based on the example of SMEs. CSOs/NGOs cannot, by their non-profit nature, cover large percentages of funding by themselves. There is so to say no ‘return on investment’ to be expected by a CSO/NGO.
- An exception to allow for CSO/NGO participation on a 100% funding rate basis should be strongly considered. An alternative could be the use of lump sums for CSOs/NGOs, again minimising their own contribution needed to fund their participation in the project.

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

- There is no indicator that can be applied automatically. Tailor-made indicators are needed for each research area, and different types of projects.
- The measures of success should depend on the subject and on the discipline; the diversity of research does not allow for one single indicator.
- A stronger emphasis should be put on the results of research projects, their excellence, dissemination and exploitation.
- New qualitative and quantitative indicators are needed to measure the policy and societal impact of projects. To achieve this, appropriate approaches should be developed through SSH research.
- For basic research indicators should be scientometric: publications in peer-reviewed journals and books but also the availability of findings in open access repositories at least after a certain period of time. These need to take into account the different framework conditions of disciplines (e.g. humanities).

4.2 Tackling societal challenges

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

- Both approaches are needed.
- Both approaches should be better connected: Results of curiosity-driven research should be picked-up by agenda-driven activities.
- The major focus should be put on agenda-driven activities (curiosity-driven research should take 30% and agenda-driven activities 70%).
- Balance between regions and countries – topics should be of relevance for participants from old and new EU member states, associated states and third countries.
- Aspects of socio-economic sciences and humanities should be present in all areas, but first and foremost there should be room for a SSH-driven research focus to address the EU2020 targets.
- The agenda-setting procedure of the societal challenges must be transparent and integrate stakeholders and all related scientific fields including social sciences and humanities.

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

- There should be more room for bottom-up activities, also in the context of collaborative research projects and agenda-driven activities.

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

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to include a society-oriented challenge in the CSF that builds upon the achievements of past research, and incorporates new dimensions. It not only focuses on European societies but also on arising responsibilities of the EU in a volatile political & economic environment. It recognizes the necessity of research focusing on explicit targets of the EU2020 Strategy. For the implementation of the challenge a minimum of €5 billion will be necessary (incl. horizontal activities like Infrastructures).

Challenge “Understanding Europe in a global context – transitions towards innovative and inclusive Societies”:

- I. Building Resilient Societies (Smart & sustainable growth; Societies in transition; Changing life circles & ageing, Harnessing diversity - overcoming inequality; Cultural change, Memory & identity);
 - II. Social innovation (Social innovation in the public sector; Social entrepreneurship; Social dimension of grand challenges; Creativity & innovation; New media & networks; Diversity & migration)
 - III. Actor Europe (Europe in the world; Governance issues; Democratisation & development; Human rights & global values; Conflicts prevention & global justice);
 - IV. Education and employment policies in the modern economy (Intergenerational equity; Innovative Educational systems; Challenges for European welfare states/employment policies);
- Horizontal activities (Foresight, Indicators, International networks, Infrastructure, Capacities)

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

- The expertise of the JRC should be available directly to Member States and not only the Commission.
- The JRC should identify a joint agenda with each Member State to deal with existing issues. It could, for example, produce expanded and comprehensive country profiles of innovation policy in Member States.
- Value for money and efficiency of delivery should be at the core of all its activities.

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

- The funding instrument "Research for the Benefit of Specific Groups – Civil Society Organisations (BSG-CSO)" needs to be adapted to the specific needs of CSOs. As CSOs are non-profit organisations, they should receive 100% funding for all activities.
- Activities that are currently funded under "Science in Society" should be continued as a horizontal issue within a Societal Challenge with a major focus on Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities.
- Translation of results in different national languages should be funded.
- Higher visibility of the programme and its results via targeting media, science museums, attracting not only PhD & MA, but also BA students and pupils to participate; at schools, in workplaces, in bookshops
- Inclusion of end-users in formulating research problems.
- If the EC takes stakeholder participation seriously in the future, CSO/NGO involvement in tackling the societal challenges will be crucial.

4.3 Strengthening competitiveness

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

- Improve the coordination between FPs, CIP & Structural Funds so as to provide support for the full spectrum of innovation (including social innovation).
- Enhance the social innovation process through social science insights that will enable society to reflect and adopt innovations.
- Address the various aspects of innovation in the SSH work programme to allow for calls that specifically tackle these issues.
- Adopt a more multidisciplinary approach.
- Multidisciplinary projects should be encouraged by funding schemes that bring together researchers from 'hard science' as well as those from SSH fields.
- Define the SSH research agenda in consultation with all relevant stakeholders and policy-makers (including end-users).
- More integrated citizen's participation in the research itself.
- More consultation with scientific communities across Europe.
- Establish a specific SSH driven societal challenge such as "Understanding Europe in a global context: transitions towards innovative and inclusive societies".
- Allow for sufficient inclusion of SSH perspectives in both the technologically driven societal challenges and in measures aiming to strengthen competitiveness.
- Put more emphasis on a bottom-up approach within the context of collaborative research, as in the IDEAS programme.

4.4 Strengthening Europe's science base and the European Research Agenda

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

- By maintaining a strong emphasis on curiosity-driven research within the SSH domain of the ERC.
- By promoting its bottom-up approach and transparent funding decision process (based solely on peer review) for use in collaborative projects.

- Through the ERC's consideration of other measures of excellence that take into account the particularities of different disciplines (e.g. for social sciences and humanities these might be different from natural and technical sciences).
- By placing more importance on the idea itself and less on the host institution.
- By refining the current board structure for SSH: the existing board should be replaced by (at least) two separate boards – one for the humanities (which mainly use qualitative methods) and one for the social sciences (which use both quantitative and qualitative methods).
- By increasing the budget that the ERC dedicates to excellent research in the social sciences and especially the humanities.
- By assuming other supportive roles such as the dissemination of best practices, or the (further) development in a database of scientific publications in the social sciences.

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

- Contribute to capacity building within the member states, which concerns the institutions and infrastructure, higher education and research training.
- Supporting the development of (virtual) research environments that allow for cooperation and data sharing in transnational and multilingual research teams (including aspects of capacity building and training).
- Strong strategic coordination between national and European level is important in order to promote complementarities and avoid duplication.
- Coordination schemes like the ERA-NET/ERA-NET+ scheme, Art. 185 and the support of European research infrastructures are viable coordination tools.
- The FP schemes "Research Potential" and "Marie Curie" could play a bigger role.
- The suggestion to integrate the structural funds/cohesion policy into the EU's research and innovation funding programmes could have considerable impact in assisting the member states in building up capacity and excellence. A possible strategy is to set up targeted financial mechanisms to countries and areas that need particular support.
- The European Commission could provide incentives for MS to create their own national research foundations under a specific set of guidelines and to create programmes for funding national research. Such programmes could be subsidised at an initial phase.

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

- The activities that are taken already - better information, more encouragement, affirmative action – point in the right direction and should be strengthened.
- Reintroduction of gender action plans that were used in FP6.
- Introduction of concrete measures as awareness toolkits, quota and evaluation criteria that can bring a change in how gender aspects are viewed and treated in the innovation system of Europe.
- Availability of childcare services in the context of EU events & conferences.
- Projects should be required to have funds available for parental leave of researchers if the necessity arises.
- Women's quota for projects, advisory boards and referees.
- Ex-post evaluation through an external advisory board or referees including ex-post allocation of funds to projects which successfully apply high level gender mainstreaming throughout the whole project runtime.
- SSH is the sector with the strongest women participation. To strengthen the funding of SSH research would therefore automatically strengthen the women participation.

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

- Currently there is a shift of the emphasis on funding Research Infrastructures more in the direction of member state responsibility – EU should continue to contribute to research infrastructures.
- ERIC inauguration coincides with extremely severe public finance problems in a number of Member States – continued EU support is needed.
- Specific types of support/coordination to the emerging national funding programmes for Research Infrastructures should be undertaken such as a discussion forum, exchanges of good practise, regional conferences, etc.

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?

- FP projects provide an opportunity for international cooperation, mutual learning and help the research community to understand the evolution of the European society and its role in the world.
- Priority areas of strategic interest are economic development and ecological policy, future of democracy, national security and human rights, unbalanced demographic structure of society and technology impact on the society.
- Current FP instruments mostly meet the demands of 3rd countries research communities, but there should be a stronger involvement of stakeholders from both EU and 3rd countries in order to get more innovation and impact upon both European and the 3rd countries societies.
- Clearer strategy for incorporation of 3rd countries in FP projects could be achieved in small scale projects serving as elementary platforms for closer cooperation between researchers from EU and 3rd countries. Small projects provide better chances for 3rd countries to launch deeper communication and understanding with European research community, leading to more innovation.
- Involvement and contribution of all partners should be acknowledged, also in IPR
- Equal rights and obligations for all consortium members, except the coordination of the project that should be only by MS or AS.
- Mutual fund between EU and 3rd countries as a new instrument for future cooperation could be considered (including ERC scheme).

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?

- A serious obstacle into further development of ERA are the different funding opportunities, or the lack of such opportunities and systems for national research funding, and national research cultures in the different MS.
- The focus on excellence and strong institutions in EU research support leads to economies of scale effect: the few big institutions become ever stronger while the rest of the research community is not included.
- Less emphasis on institutions and more on the researcher's specialized expertise and innovative ideas might help to include partners from institutions in EU research projects which are not yet well-integrated into ERA.
- Support to facilitate multilingualism in research and the integration of culturally different research traditions will include researchers who are presently excluded from EU funded research.
- There should be more ERA-Nets with emphasis on bringing together countries with well-developed national research and funding institutions with countries that are still developing such institutions in order to generate knowledge transfer and inter-institutional learning.
- It will be important to ensure that ERA objectives are an integral component of future EU funding mechanisms.
- Funding instruments should emphasise the inclusion of stakeholders in research design.

Closing question

Are there any other ideas or comments which you believe are important for future EU research and innovation funding and are not covered in the Green Paper?

- A strategy how future EU research will reflect the EU2020 strategy.
- SSH domains of research: Social innovation, smart and sustainable growth.
- Capacity building measures.
- How to better connect existing funding instruments and measures.



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