

How to optimise participation in FP7

Dr. Alain Vanvossel, Head of Unit, DG Research, European Commission.

Abstract

Starting from the content of FP7, the speaker will provide suggestions i) on how to further optimise the participation of Central and Eastern European Academies of Science and of their scientists in the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP) and ii) how to strengthen their role in the ERA.

In this context specific elements, which will be addressed, are:

- Knowledge building on the content and mechanics of the FP7;
- Insight and choice of funding schemes and programmes;
- The ideal project application;
- Excellence of the partnership;
- Definition of scientific strengths as a prerequisite for success;
- Networking of scientists and managers.

The opportunities of cooperation and coordination at institutional and at programme levels and the collaboration at project level will be addressed, taking into account the potential roles of Academies of Science as research founders and as research performers in the ERA.

Finally, the Green Paper " The ERA : New perspectives" and its potential for CEEN Members will be briefly discussed.

Use of EU Structural funds for RTD purposes

Ioannis Boutselis, DG Regio, European Commission

Abstract

The new cohesion policy encompasses a more strategic approach aiming at boosting and integrating growth strategies at European, regional and local level. It takes into account the territorial dimension and specificity of regions, based on a reinforced partnership. This ensures that Member States, regions and other stakeholders share the goals of the programmes and projects. The regional level is particularly appropriate because of the proximity of contacts. Innovation is recognised as the basic means to deliver sustainable growth and jobs and the regional authorities responsible for Structural Funds programmes are particularly well placed to act as catalysts for innovation.

One of the main aims in the new period 2007-2013 is to make regional RTD innovation and education supply more efficient and accessible to firms with poles of excellence, regional clusters. Structural Funds investments will ensure business support services, technology transfer, science parks, ICT centres, incubators, clusters, plus more traditional services like management, marketing, technical support, recruitment, other professional and commercial services, will fully exploit European strengths in eco-innovations, introduce environmental management systems (cf FP for Competitiveness and innovation), promote entrepreneurship, and the creation of new firms, spin out and spin off for example through awareness raising, prototyping tutoring, managerial and technological support to entrepreneurs to be.

In the programming period **2007-2013**, Structural Fund support for Research Infrastructure and innovation will be about 10% of the total: more where the regions are making a big effort to catch up with Lisbon strategy targets.

COST builds Science and Technology networks

Guenther Siegel, Science Officer, COST

Abstract

COST, an intergovernmental European initiative, is an active partner in the European Research Area. COST exists to foster cooperation between nationally-funded research activities. COST Actions are networks of scientists receiving support to enable them to cooperate, and to disseminate the results of their cooperation. Existing COST Actions operate across a wide spectrum of scientific fields, and can be multi-disciplinary in nature.

Scientists themselves following the "bottom-up" principle, propose new Actions making COST an attractive forum for new and emerging topics. Since COST funds the networking activities and not the research itself, new partners can join throughout the life of an action as the field develops.

COST was launched in 1971, making it one of the longest-standing European research instruments. Today COST has developed into one of the largest frameworks for research cooperation in Europe involving some 30.000 scientists from the 35 COST member countries. On the basis of mutual benefit, COST also welcomes participation from institutions in non-COST countries and from Non-Governmental Organisations.

The cooperation has an annual budget of around €20 million, however facilitates research valued at a hundred times this figure.

COST addresses the growing demand for cooperation across national borders and across research disciplines. As precursor of advanced multidisciplinary research COST is anticipating and complementing the activities of the EU RTD Framework Programmes, constituting a "bridge" towards the scientific communities of emerging countries, increasing the mobility of researchers across Europe and fostering the establishment of "Networks of Excellence" in its 9 scientific domains: Biomedicine and Molecular Biosciences; Food and Agriculture; Forests, their Products and Services; Materials, Physics and Nanosciences; Chemistry and Molecular Sciences and Technologies; Earth System Science and Environmental Management; Information and Communication Technologies; Transport and Urban Development; Individuals, Society, Culture and Health.

In the last years all Balkan countries with the exception of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro have joined COST. Today those countries are actively participating in nearly all 200 running COST Actions. Thus, several hundred researchers from this region represent their countries in the Management Committees or are otherwise involved in the activities of the running Actions.

In the frame of the last Ministerial Conference held 2003 in Dubrovnik, Ministers responsible for COST agreed to strengthen cooperation with those countries of the Western Balkan which have not yet joined COST. The Near Neighbour Policy of COST allows now also the financing of experts from the non-COST countries of this region.

For more information, in particular Action related information please visit the COST website:
<http://www.cost.esf.org>

Smolenice Declaration

We, Presidents and members of Presidia of Academies of Sciences from the Visegrad countries (V4 countries), namely the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Slovak Academy of Sciences, on the meeting in the Conference Centre of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Smolenice (23 and 24 April 2007) declare in a common consensus that:

- Participation of researchers from Academies of Sciences from V4 countries in the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development of the European Union with allocation of 54,5 billion € for the period of seven years is a big challenge for them to present their scientific and research abilities and skills, and to compete in the European Research Area.
- Participation in the EU Seventh Framework Programme means to respect new financial terms and conditions of supporting the projects, the costs of which must be partially (usually up to 25%) covered by the project implementers.
- Budgets of the Academies of Sciences in the V4 countries, that are substantially dependent on the support of the state budget, are not able to cope with such cost constraints.

Governments in the V4 countries should deal with this problem and ensure generating of resources for co-financing of projects. Otherwise, it would not be possible to ensure return of national means and resources invested by member states into the EU budget for science and research.

Trusting their high responsibility to support own national economies through supporting science, participants of the meeting of V4 countries Academies of Sciences call the governments of the V4 countries to solve this problem in a way that science and research in the V4 countries will be an equivalent partner in the European Research Area.

To make an effective use of the research potential of professional national research institutions, Presidents of the V4 Academies of Sciences call for founding an European Association of Research Institutions.

Václav Pačes
President
Academy of Sciences
of the Czech Republic

Silvester Vizi
President
Hungarian Academy
of Sciences

Michał Kleiber
President
Polish Academy
of Sciences



Štefan Luby
President
Slovak Academy
of Sciences

Done in Bratislava on 24 April 2007

The common European corporate tax base and R&D.

Attila Marján

Member of cabinet of Mr. László Kovács, European Commission

To address the problems arising from the coexistence of 27 different tax systems and in order to improve the competitiveness of the EU business sector, the European Commission will propose a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base for European companies. There are considerable advantages associated with the introduction of such a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base. CCCTB would enable companies operating in the single market to follow the same rules for calculating their tax bases in different Member States of the European Union. In fact, a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base would solve the current tax problems linked to cross-border activities and restructuring of groups of companies. It would abolish the costs relating to double taxation and transfer pricing. A CCCTB would also significantly reduce compliance costs because groups would no longer need to comply with the tax reporting requirements of numerous national systems.

As the profit will be consolidated, it needs to be apportioned among the countries where the firm operates. Consequently a method for sharing the consolidated tax base between Member States is necessary.

On this subject, technical and political discussions started learning also from the US and Canadian experience.

The common tax base will be broad and will apply very few exemptions, but it seems to be clear already that the treatment of R&D activities will be an exception. Both companies and member states are aware that tax measures can do a lot to enhance research development activities. Therefore in the course of the finalisation of this project, which is a milestone of tax policy at European level, special attention will be given to the treatment of research and development.



Sustainable Neighbourhood – from Lisbon to Leipzig through Research

8 - 10 May 2007, Leipzig

German EU Council Presidency

EU 2007 DE

The Lisbon to Leipzig Declaration: Promoting a sustainable and competitive Europe through Research

Vision

To position research in support of sustainability as an engine for European competitiveness within the Lisbon Agenda.

Preamble

1. Lisbon Agenda. The Lisbon Agenda was launched at the European Council in March 2000 with the aim of making the EU a leading knowledge-based economy in the world. To achieve this, research will have to play a central role in developing the European society and economy (“knowledge society”).

2. Role of Research. Europe will need to put economic development on a sustainable footing. Research is indispensable for reconciling development with the preservation of our natural environment: it has to analyse the basic conditions of our life, to contribute to the development of innovation and new technologies and to their diffusion, and to develop tools and instruments for enhancing the quality of life as an integral part of development. Research contributes to an open and democratic society and thus acts in favour of sustainable development. To achieve this, the research process must itself be transparent and pluralistic.

3. Research for Sustainability. Research has to address key challenges that sustainable development poses: high degrees of uncertainty and complexity, intra- and intergenerational equity, functional and spatial interdependencies, long time horizons, decoupling of the use of resources and economic growth, and the large-scale and potentially irreversible harm caused by environmental threats such as global climate change and biodiversity loss.

4. New forms of research and involvement. Mobilising research for sustainability also requires new and additional efforts to promote integration of research and involvement of research in complex decision-making. We call upon the European research community and policy-makers to take up the challenge of sustainability research.



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Commitments of the European Research Community

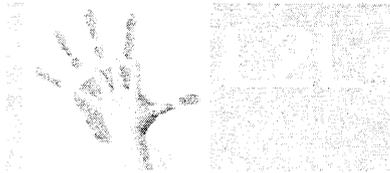
5. Focus on complex problems and integrated approaches. European research commits itself to focusing on the challenges of securing our common future; it will tackle the complex problems of global change in environment, society, and economy. Addressing complexity requires researchers to take the ecological, economic, and social side-effects of societal and economic developments into account in a life-cycle perspective, and to develop systematic answers to humanity's global challenges. Ultimately, research should contribute to changes in our patterns of consumption and production in such a way that we use energy and natural resources more efficiently and sustainably.

6. Disciplinary excellence and interdisciplinarity. Research of this nature requires disciplinary excellence and interdisciplinary orientation. Science relevant to sustainability requires an explicit orientation towards societal needs. European researchers commit themselves to further developing basic research as well as knowledge that is of relevance to solving problems in society and economy. Interdisciplinarity is required not only within but also between the natural sciences, the social sciences and engineering.

7. Cooperation within research. European researchers commit themselves to fostering cooperation between different research organisations (e.g. universities, research institutes, industry) across Europe and third countries. The aim is to effectively bring together research expertise and to bundle resources.

8. Dialogue between science and society. European researchers commit themselves to a dialogue with society – companies, authorities, non-governmental organisations, citizens groups etc. involved in sustainable development, at all levels. Taking the science-policy interface seriously means realising that research is one contributor to societal decisions, and developing research agendas in cooperation with stakeholders, as well as ensuring that societal knowledge is taken into account in the research process.

9. Training young researchers. The European scientific community encourages fresh ideas and the production of new knowledge, especially with a view of training, motivating and encouraging young researchers to take on greater role in research for sustainability.



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Expectations from European research policy

10. Encourage independent research. In order to remain innovative and competitive worldwide, the European scientific community requires support for independent and critical research. Independent research that explores completely new issues and solutions provides a basis for addressing the needs of future generations and Europe's global responsibility.

11. Supporting research excellence. European research policy has to provide continuous and long-term support for excellence in basic and applied research. In order to promote science for sustainability, policy-makers should focus on setting medium to long-term priorities and ensuring the necessary research infrastructure. Within this framework, the scientific community should set its research agenda and respond to research demands at different timescales. Creating a competitive and sustainable future for Europe requires long-term policy frameworks combined with academic autonomy.

12. Interdisciplinary projects. European research policy should set the right incentives for problem-oriented inter- and transdisciplinary research. At the European level, collaborative research projects and networks as funded by the Framework Programmes have opened a new level of cooperation across scientific communities and disciplinary boundaries. Support for such problem-oriented, inter- and transdisciplinary projects should continue on a long-term basis within the European Research Area.

13. Foster science-policy interfaces. European research policy should foster dialogues between science and society. This does not only imply the transfer and application of scientific results in society, but also the strengthening of societal actors in discussing research priorities and including stakeholder knowledge in interpreting research outcomes. Future policy needs to integrate different forms of knowledge across different policy fields. The special role of science identified in the Lisbon Agenda should be reflected in more extensive science-policy dialogues.