



Joint Position Paper

10th European Framework programme for Research and Innovation



Aarhus University, INRAE and Wageningen University & Research, as leading organisations involved in many collaborative Research & Innovation Horizon Europe projects notably on agriculture, food and the environment, are keen to contribute to the discussions on FP10 and propose the key messages below. These messages are independent of the architecture provided for R&I within the next Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) but stress key principles to maximise the impact of R&I for the benefit of EU's global competitiveness. Above all, European research and innovation require a dedicated, coherent, stable and ambitious budget in order to continue supporting European competitiveness as well as the green transition.



FP10 General approach

1. **Competitiveness and sustainability should not be opposed or considered separately**, but rather in synergy to strengthen European global leadership. The EU needs to ensure that the system in which its industry and economy operate meets the challenges of resilience and sustainability to guarantee both current and long-term competitiveness. The pursuit of a high Green Deal ambition is therefore a strong signal to **link the fields of agriculture, food and the environment to the EU green transition and competitiveness goals**. This calls for far-reaching changes to productions systems. Only a **large spectrum of research from fundamental research to applied research and innovation**, embedded in the EU's industrial and sustainability strategy, will provide the next generation of solutions to these complex challenges.
2. For innovation, FP10 must support collaborative, interdisciplinary research across the whole continuum of research and innovation, including "Research Actions" as a **new category for collaborative research projects with low TRL (TRL 2 to 4)**. This would allow the **completion of the TRL chain** (alongside RIA and IA). Supporting collaborative basic research in all major scientific fields will therefore provide the EU with a high level of preparedness for breakthrough innovations.
3. A new "project cycle" approach is needed to create a **portfolio of collaborative research projects organised in increasing TRLs that are part of a "challenge-driven programme"**. This approach needs to be based on long-term planning for the financing from low-TRL projects through to high-TRL projects that meet the same challenge, ensuring that projects are linked beyond their own lifecycle. This **portfolio approach ensures that projects progress in synergy**, allowing to

navigate the TRL chain when necessary and to create more impact. Inspired by the great success of the Proof of Concept (PoC) grants in the ERC, it can also be considered to **apply a PoC possibility to all instruments in FP10**, in order to ensure that results of low TRL projects with a high potential for commercialisation or social innovation find their way more readily to start-up or scale-up scenarios

4. To achieve impact, the collaborative dimension of European research brings clear European added value and fosters innovations. Collaborative R&I projects are the only instruments within Framework Programmes in which European and global consortia with different types of stakeholders and end-users work together and co-create to tackle the global challenges and foster the needed transitions. Pan-European collaborative research enables large-scale projects to be carried out by pooling resources -- thus accelerating the development of solutions to global challenges. Combining **complementary expertise, skills and resources** from multiple countries and players in collaborative research projects creates a critical mass that raises the **quality of research and innovation outputs and fosters innovative solutions with and for end-users**.

Governance, budget and simplification

5. It is important for the effectiveness of research and innovation to **strengthen the synergies between FP10 and other EU funds**, as it could help to feed the innovation pipeline with outcomes from projects that go beyond the strict area of research or facilitate the deployment of solutions to relevant stakeholders. Synergies beyond FP10 must not, however, lead to greater complexity in project management.
6. The FP10 budget should increase substantially and include R&I on food and bioeconomy, but also on agriculture and the environment. Massive investments in research and innovation are needed at the European level to maintain the EU scientific and technological sovereignty in a highly competitive global environment.

Moreover, the challenges related to agriculture, food and environment are so important and urgent that they cannot be tackled without a significant increase in funding for research and innovation in these fields. Today, more than 50% of the world's GDP is exposed to natural capital risk, and this is often considered an underestimate. To take just one example, although food security has not been an issue in Europe for decades, the combination of the current geopolitical context with climate and environmental crises makes **European food security a key priority**. In this context, it is urgent to find solutions for a more resilient agri-food system, less dependent on imports (whether of inputs or raw food), adapted to the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, and guaranteeing access to healthy and nutritious food for all. There should be a secure, non-fungible funding dedicated to R&I on the bioeconomy, food, agriculture and the environment.

- 7. FP10 must pursue simplification efforts, especially to make participation and coordination easier.** Simplification should target both pre-award (less prescriptive calls, two-phase topics) and post-award procedures (streamlining and simplifying reporting, facilitate interactions with executive agencies), so that the simplification efforts apply to and benefit both the Commission and the beneficiaries. **Stable procedures** within and between Framework Programmes and a **balanced approach to project size and expectations** are also decisive factors in attractiveness.

Specific instruments

- 8. European Partnerships are strategic instruments for ensuring synergies and alignment between national and European research policies and priorities, as well as optimal public-private collaboration through a jointly defined agenda.** By design, these instruments are relevant to address some research questions with a systemic and integrative approach. However, FP10 must simplify and clarify the participation rules to enable their full potential. Activities developed under European partnerships should be complementary to R&I projects funded by the Framework Programme, as partnerships calls fund annual smaller-scale projects. It is therefore essential that the themes covered by these partnerships do not stop being addressed within the scope of FP10 collaborative calls.

- 9. Research Infrastructures (RIs), in addition to Technology Infrastructures (TIs), are essential for European competitiveness in science and innovation. They should retain their own identity as tools devoted to ERA excellence, while bringing the concept of openness on board in order to create genuine RI ecosystems,** based on networks and people, open to SMEs and collaborative projects. Efforts should therefore be made in FP10 to harvest the full potential of RIs ecosystem by integrating open platforms as part of the operational modus in RIs and ensuring adequate funding in the long run. FP10 should also promote the AI ecosystem in RIs by supporting the provision of AI-ready data and facilitating data and knowledge integration by research communities. Fostering the sustainability of RIs should also be a key component of FP10.

- 10. The solution-oriented approaches proposed by European Missions are relevant** for responding to social and public policy issues. As **Missions go far beyond solving research questions** and operate according to a specific timetable and governance, they **should not be financed solely by FP10**.

International

- 11.** To remain competitive in the international research arena and meet the scientific needs required to address global issues, **FP10 should facilitate the establishment of open international scientific partnerships** tailored to these needs, i.e. with scientific partners of excellence and/or key partners outside Europe.





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