Policy Brief
The Western Balkans on the Road to FP10

September 2024

POLICY ANSWERS

Participating in the discussion on the next Framework Programme

Several governments, associations, institutions, and stakeholder groups have already suggested possible changes and new ideas to improve the effectiveness of the coming European Union (EU) Framework Programme (FP) 10, from its contents to its structure. The POLICY ANSWERS project aims to contribute to this discussion, with recommendations from the Western Balkans (WB) gathered through desk research, a survey and key informant interviews. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia are all associated to the current Framework Programme, and most of them have been already associated to previous FPs. They are potential future members of the EU and already actively integrate their research and innovation (R&I) systems into the European ones.

This Policy Brief contains the recommendations highlighted in research conducted in the WB region during the first half of 2024. It provides a regional point of view on designing and improving the FP overall.

The resulting recommendations have been grouped into six main areas:

1. **Association and Participation**
2. **Synergies and Complementarities**
3. **Programme Design**
4. **Targeted Support Measures**
5. **Instruments and Project Types**
6. **Programme Implementation**

FP10 can fulfil its main objectives by addressing these recommendations, such as supporting excellence, tackling societal challenges and spurring innovation. It can also effectively support the WBs in catching up, building capacities, and integrating into the European Research Area (ERA) while benefiting from the region's expertise and perspectives on common challenges.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Dall, E. (2024).
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1

Association and Participation

Through a comprehensive research process involving desk analysis, qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and a survey, recommendations related to the participation of the WB in the FP10 activities were developed and grouped into six areas, spanning from the association process to stakeholder inclusivity.

1. Association Process

- Clearly communicate political will to raise trust
- Prepare thoroughly by conducting exploratory talks and initiate the association process earlier and faster to be able to conclude negotiations quickly
- Avoid 'gaps' between the start of the programme and the announcement of the association

2. Budgeting for Associated Countries

- Provide clearly explained payment schemes with illustrative examples before signing the Agreement
- Ensure financial stability and clarity on the contribution amounts, e.g. agree timely to allow budget planning three years in advance
- Continue financial support for participation through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)

3. Systemic Change, Capacity Building and Preparation for Enlargement

- Acknowledge capacity differences and needs to get ready for enlargement and full integration to the ERA, and continue addressing these needs via 'Widening' schemes or dedicated calls e.g. in EUREKA or similar programmes or networks
- Allow for ambitious catch-up missions to align with European R&I standards
- Avoid supporting 'isolated islands of excellence' without ecosystem impact
- Provide dedicated funding streams either through Widening calls or the set-up of a dedicated instrument, e.g. a Western Balkans Research Foundation

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4. Increase Participation and Success Rates

- Maintain excellence as a priority over geographical distribution, but continue schemes with geographical priority to build up experience, e.g. with project coordination
- Allow for projects with macro-regional impacts instead of a generic EU-wide focus (e.g. addressing specific ecological and health challenges in less advanced regions in innovative ways)
- Increase the available budget to raise success rates, especially for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and collaborative projects
- Appreciate and continue support for regional projects (such as POLICY ANSWERS) focused on specific aspects required for faster integration into the ERA

5. Stakeholder Inclusivity

- Continue the co-design and co-creation approach and increase engagement with policy makers and key R&I stakeholders from the region
- Ensure inclusivity in relation to diverse organisation types (e.g. public entities not focused on research), involve civil society and NGOs and tailor communication with them
- Provide training and capacity building for policy makers and businesses to increase the impact of scientific research
- Further promote inclusion of WB universities, chambers of commerce and other actors in respective alliances and networks
- Nurture the 'pockets of excellence' in both public and private sectors to develop next-generation talents

6. Inclusion in the ERA

- Foster regional integration, reciprocity, and equality, acknowledging the mutual benefits of cooperation with the WB
- Explain better and more regularly ERA policies to a broad group of stakeholders
- Promote WB participation in ERA governance and dedicated groups (ERA Forum, Partnerships, Missions, etc.) and support early access to new groups, e.g. European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Water or new Partnerships
- Support ERA implementation through FP10 and proactively involve the WB
- Support well-structured 'Horizon Offices' in the region
- Enhance focus on adequate R&D statistics and expenditure measurement
- Emphasise anticipatory science advice, evidence-based policymaking, foresight and professionalisation of research management
- Foster EU integration by aligning research standards
- Promote the proactive use of the Policy Support Facility in the WB
- Continue cooperation with the Joint Research Centre (JRC), providing independent scientific advice and assistance with the development and implementation of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3)

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Synergies and Complementarities

Approaching the new multi-annual financial framework, it is important to leverage on synergies, between FP10 and other available programmes supporting pre-accession assistance (e.g. IPA), cohesion and structural development as well as in cooperation with other enlargement candidates.

1.   Focusing IPA and Other Budgets on R&I

*   Use synergies with IPA and the new Growth Plan to improve structural conditions in the WB; ring-fence IPA budget for R&I institution building
*   Further enable the use of IPA funding for research equipment and infrastructures as it is difficult to use FP funds to buy and upgrade research infrastructure (RI)
*   Support acquisition of RIs complementary to the EU ones and participation in European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs)
*   Strengthen synergies of FP10's implementation with all EU policies and initiatives, including enlargement policies, e.g. by using more TAIEX funds (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) for capacity building in innovation
*   Use the support by the new Growth Plan strategically for R&I investment
*   Increase the importance placed on R&I for all stakeholders (e.g. increase emphasis in the EU Delegations) and jointly advocate for the required increase of funds for R&I
*   Further open programmes to incentivise cooperation and promote their use

2.   Global Approach

*   Recognise the science diplomacy benefits of cooperation with WB for the EU and its Member States
*   Promote WB's researchers and innovators as partners, not threats
*   Maintain cooperation opportunities amid alternative global partnerships
*   Work with all countries focusing on positive societal impacts and support this approach in the region
*   Address risks pragmatically and support consortia in their respective risk assessments
*   Maintain and increase the focus on WB inclusivity and regional cooperation, e.g. through joint integration into the European Research Area (ERA)
*   While increasing the EU's strategic autonomy, maintain openness and appreciate the strategic importance of Horizon for Europe's global leadership
*   Appreciate the diversity of cooperation partners with different perspectives and backgrounds, strengthen and further promote academic freedom and research integrity

Enhancing FP10

Further detailed recommendations have been developed in order to enhance the effectiveness of the forthcoming FP10 by incorporating insights and needs specific to the WB region in the operation of the programme, from programme design to implementation. These recommendations emphasise the importance of inclusivity, synergies, and tailored support measures to ensure that the WB can fully participate in and benefit from the FP10 initiatives.

By addressing these recommendations, FP10 has the potential to not only advance R&I across Europe but also to support the integration of the WB into the ERA, thereby contributing to the region's growth and stability. The continued collaboration and proactive engagement of all stakeholders will be crucial in realising these goals and maximising the impact of FP10 in the region and beyond.

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Programme Design

The following recommendations regarding the design of the programme, considering the WB perspective, have been categorised based on the approach taken by the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) Task Force which organised its discussion based on three main building blocks:

- Ambitions, vision and context
- Guiding principles and cross-cutting issues
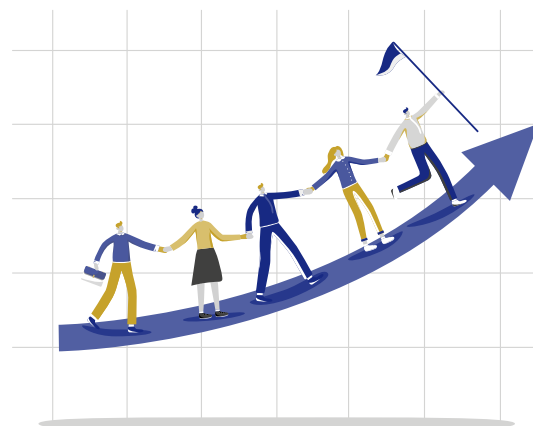- Structure and programming

1. Ambition, Vision and Context

- Keep the focus on R&I excellence and interdisciplinary research, but consider and take into account the contexts
- Embrace risk of failure if there is cooperation
- Increase the focus on basic research to keep a balance between fundamental and applied research
- Cover the whole R&I value chain and embrace risk-taking, include research-to-market transfer for economic growth; however, maintain a priority for mid-range Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) rather than high TRLs
- Address key societal challenges, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), topics of S3, and support alignment in relation to digital, green (and health) priorities allowing for regional as well as macro-regional impacts; allow flexibility to address future crises
- Support the role of Artificial Intelligence across all fields, as a catalyst for scientific breakthroughs, as a key instrument in the scientific process as well as a tool to support project and programme management
- Increase cooperation with social sciences across all topics and integrate Social Readiness Levels (SRLs) assessments as well as non-commercial and social innovation impacts
- Create broader flexible instruments encouraging participation of a wide scope of innovative SMEs and stakeholders
- Emphasise networking and knowledge sharing, e.g. through supporting the COST programme (European Cooperation in Science and Technology)
- Maintain the core project types, e.g. Research and Innovation Action (RIA), Innovation Actions (IA), Coordination and Support Action (CSA), while increasing flexibility in project sizes
- Missions are perceived as good 'PR activity' and thematically important for the WB; mission-orientation at the level of thematic clusters is considered promising
- Launch dedicated activities to activate research infrastructures, standardisation bodies and other stakeholders in Associated Countries (AC) (including the WB) for EU Missions
- Prioritise centrally managed funding over complex co-funding mechanisms
- Capitalise on macro-regional approaches
- Avoid 'closed clubs'

2. Guiding Principles and Cross-Cutting Issues

- Continue emphasis on cross-cutting issues (e.g. open science, ethics integration, gender equality) with sufficient resources; ensure that cross-cutting issues are not perceived as burdensome red tape
- Provide targeted training to properly address the principles competitively and support the development of professional research support staff addressing the implementation of cross-cutting principles
- Highlight inclusivity across researchers, institutions, disciplines, etc.
- Provide structured support for knowledge valorisation with a particular focus on the widening countries and enlargement candidates
- Strengthen evidence-informed policymaking approaches in the region and emphasise science for policy projects, including for enlargement
- Increase emphasis on social sciences and social innovation, and strive to include Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) components and researchers for societal impact assessments
- Exercise caution regarding potential corruption risks (e.g. in lump sum projects)

3. Structure and Programming

- Simplify the complexity that confuses non-insiders and structure the Pillars with clear concepts for grants. A solution to make it easier to communicate the foci could be a division into 1) 'bottom-up' – similar to the current Pillar 1; and 2) 'top-down' funding – similar to Pillar 2
- Focus industrial policy aspects and higher TRLs in a separate pillar with a lower funding rate, loans, cooperation with investors etc. – similar to the current Pillar 3 – and improve accessibility for AC (including WB economies)
- Separate calls which are for dedicated named beneficiaries or very limited sets of stakeholders into a separate specialist programme, e.g. ERA-based actions like ERA-NETs, Presidency Conferences etc., and avoid creating presumably 'open' calls which are tailored to already active consortia
- Enable successful projects and consortia to request extensions, evaluated together with the final project reviews, instead of opening new calls and requiring new proposals
- Consider the timing of calls, deadlines and one-/two stage call types not from the bureaucratic perspective but from the content and impact perspective, e.g. with adequate longer lead times to prepare complex multi-stakeholder proposals addressing pertinent societal challenges on the one hand, and on the other hand, urgent and up-to-date topics which must be addressed in a more short-term manner

Targeted Support Measures

In the following additional recommendations are listed from the perspective of the WB in relation to the Widening Programme and the Seal of Excellence.

1.   Widening Programme

- Keep and expand Widening initiatives (or similar) as important regionally specific schemes
- Increase Widening programme budget
- Acknowledge pockets of excellence and allow for tailoring approaches to specific contexts
- Widening should support excellence facing systemic restrictions in their ecosystem
- Clarify that involvement of the WB and enlargement candidates is not taking away from EU Widening countries
- Clearly communicate that the definition of Widening countries includes WB
- Mainstream the inclusion of underrepresented regions as partners also in other parts of the programme (improving local circumstances is beneficial for all)
- Support dedicated dissemination and exploitation in Widening countries (e.g. for projects that do not have any partner from that geographical area)
- Provide more dedicated calls for enlargement candidates due to greater and specific challenges they face (including non-availability of Structural Funds)

2.   Widening Calls

- Support all project types in the Widening Programme, e.g. RIA, IA, European Research Council (ERC) and MSCA, not just CSAs
- Maintain the research component in Widening actions like Twinning
- Make the Hop On scheme less restrictive in relation to project eligibility
- Reduce high co-financing requirements like those for Teaming
- Provide dedicated MSCA/Widening Fellowships for repatriation
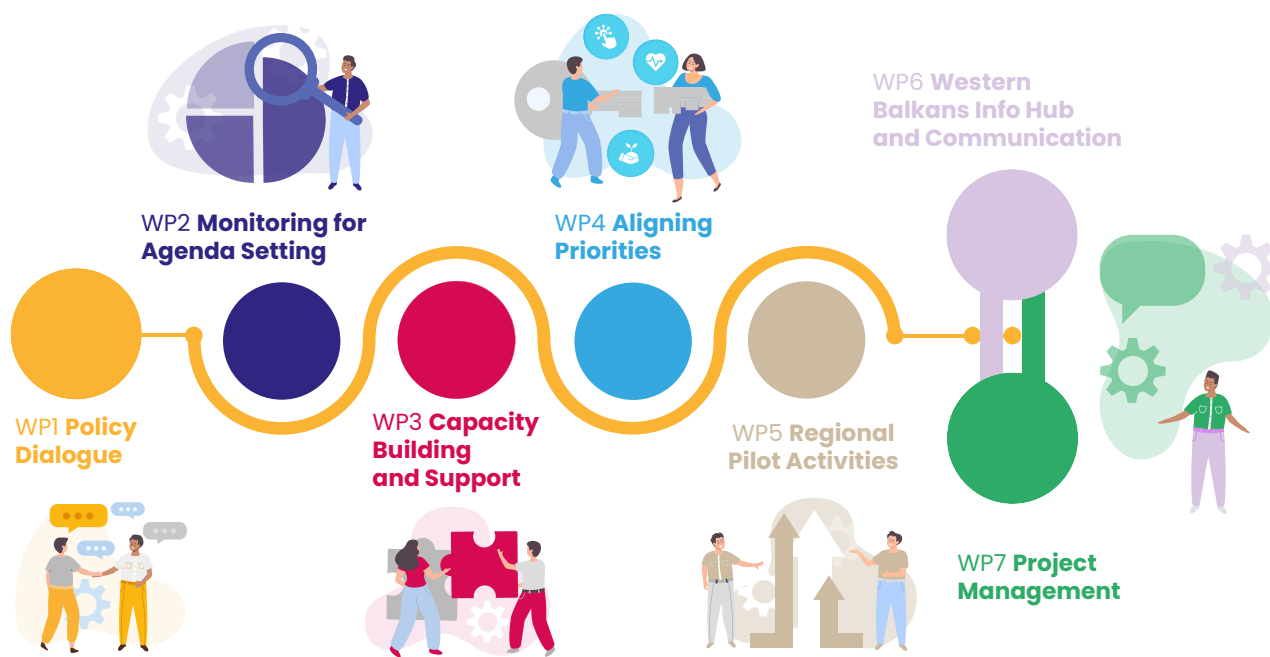- Facilitate access to world-class research infrastructures

3.   Seal of Excellence

- Seal of Excellence (SoE) funding could overcome the vicious circle of lack of experience and provide a second chance for funding of excellent proposals
- Provide dedicated support for creating pioneering 'first cases' as currently there is a lack of well-functioning examples of SoE schemes
- Ring-fence budget, e.g. from IPA, for SoE proposals from the region

POLICY ANSWERS

Who are we...

WP2 **Monitoring for Agenda Setting**

WP4 **Aligning Priorities**

WP6 **Western Balkans Info Hub and Communication**

WP1 **Policy Dialogue**

WP3 **Capacity Building and Support**

WP5 **Regional Pilot Activities**

WP7 **Project Management**

Strengthening Research and Innovation in the Western Balkans: The POLICY ANSWERS project

POLICY ANSWERS is a strategic initiative funded by the European Commission (EC) through the Horizon Europe project "R&I POLICY making, implementation ANd Support in the WEsteRn BalkanS". The project focuses on enhancing research and innovation (R&I) policymaking and governance systems in the region, while also addressing aspects of education, culture, youth, and sports. By providing essential support to the region's development, POLICY ANSWERS plays a crucial role in strengthening the WBs' potential for successful participation in regional and multilateral research and innovation activities. Initiatives like this are vital and should be continued to ensure sustained growth, stability, and integration in the region.

An integral part of this effort is the 'Western Balkans Info Hub', which serves as a key platform for sharing knowledge, updates, and best practices. The WB Info Hub plays a vital role in disseminating important information both to and from the region, significantly contributing to the visibility and progress of the WB. Promoting and expanding these resources is essential for the ongoing success of the region's development initiatives and for fostering regional cooperation in R&I, networking, and access to excellence.

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Instruments and Project Types

The following recommendations are addressing various project types as well as specific instruments and sub-programmes.

1. Specific Instruments

- Reduce the number of sub-programmes and acronyms, e.g. Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEIs), and limit the introduction of new instruments and project types to avoid increasing complexity
- Increase the use of prizes and keep the three main project types which are working well: RIA, IA, CSA; in particular, continue CSAs as important capacity-building tools for WB
- EUR 2-6 million are seen as adequate typical project sizes, but allow more flexibility and enable also smaller projects (financial support to third party grants are impactful but need to be better communicated)
- Avoid topics or calls funding only one project and separate the communication on less relevant and specialist schemes to avoid overburdening researchers trying to understand the schemes
- Allow geographical ring-fencing and support regional programme-level collaboration between R&I policy makers, e.g. the launch of a regional innovation voucher scheme
- Consider allowing extensions of well-performing projects

2. European Research Council (ERC)

- Promote more good practices and role models from the WB
- Utilise Seals of Excellence to benefit excellent but not yet fully competitive proposals

3. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

- Support short-term mobility and different career stages
- Prioritise brain circulation and avoid brain drain; dedicate support for repatriation of young experts after stays abroad
- Address low uptake and administrative burdens in WB
- Continue Widening Fellowships as second chance
- Apply simpler procedures where possible; in particular, remove discriminatory research age limits for Postdocs

4. European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST)

- Increase budget to allow funding for more COST Actions and cut-off dates
- Add some research funding to produce more tangible results and support the next generation of researchers
- Strengthen local administration to improve management, e.g. by providing technical assistance to COST National Coordinators and the Committee of Senior Officials
- Support those who are chairing or taking up leadership roles in COST Actions and capitalise on the outcomes and connections achieved to strengthen ERA implementation and global engagement
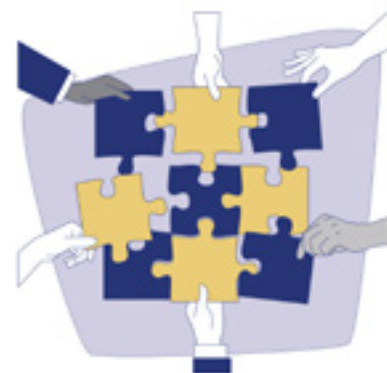
5. Research Infrastructures (RIs)

- Provide more funding for expansion of RIs towards WB
- Increase participation of RIs and stakeholders from the region in strategic discussions; in particular increase the involvement of WB in RI calls, European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), etc.
- Focus on distributed mid-size complementary RIs over new large ones; emphasise inclusion of WB stakeholders in distributed infrastructures
- Clarify procedures and ensure easy access for all users, including industry
- Enable structural investments for WB higher education institutions and research-performing organisations to meet participation criteria
- Build trust for contributing to operational costs of large-scale RIs
- Develop local staff by establishing user communities
- Align RIs to address missions through cross-disciplinary collaboration and increase participation of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in ERICs and RIs

6. European Innovation Council (EIC)

- Increase awareness of the available funding opportunities and exchange in the European Innovation Council Forum to coordinate innovation policy
- Assist WB applicants e.g. through financial support for proposal preparation
- Provide dedicated calls for WB to reach next levels
- Strengthen innovation hubs, accelerators, and incubators in the WB and support their networking capacities to facilitate further partnerships
- Improve and broaden procedures beyond deep tech companies
- Offer bridge financing to help start-ups and SMEs to cover the gap between EIC grant approval and disbursement

7. European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

- EIT's capacity building and education aspects have high added value; the Community Regional Innovation Scheme hubs show positive impacts, and the topics addressed are relevant for the WB
- Simplify procedures and provide clearer overview of Knowledge Innovation Community (KIC) offerings
- Increase transparency of calls beyond insider networks
- Consider discounts or alternatives to membership payment requirements
- Harmonise reporting processes on the participant portal

8. Partnerships

- Address low participation and lack of knowledge and understanding in relation to Partnerships
- Improve communication and interaction with enlargement candidates
- Minimise administrative burdens for participation
- Ensure alignment and focus; avoid duplication of efforts; reduce the number of partnerships

9. Joint Research Centre (JRC)

- Strengthen the promotion of JRC's independent scientific policy advice in the WB
- Identify experts to collaborate and form virtual excellence centres
- Support S3 development and prioritisation
- Promote cooperation on the science-for-policy interface, addressing e.g. the green transition and pollution

Programme Implementation

This last set of recommendations focuses on suggestions in relation to the implementation of the future FP at all stages, from the application to the payments.

1.   Administrative Processes

• Further streamline administrative processes, from proposal preparation to project implementation, reporting, and payments
• Establish clear rules, e.g. for and with the corporate grant agreement model
• Provide regulations early and provide final versions of critical documents as soon as possible
• Improve communication channels on country-specific financial rules
• Encourage loosening of administrative constraints on the level of institutions or economies

2.   EC and Agency Management

• Provide more proactive notifications of relevant calls
• Harmonise rules across different agencies to avoid confusion
• Ensure lessons learned are transferred seamlessly between projects managed by different agencies
• Ensure agencies and services have the capacity to enhance project impacts when claiming to do so
• Increase stability of project officer assignments during implementation
• Improve transparency by republishing the 'who is who' directory

3.   Tools for Applicants and Beneficiaries

• Improve the user-friendliness of the Funding & Tenders Portal
• Enable better search for relevant topics and opportunities
• Clearly indicate eligibility of participation from AC (including the WB) per call
• Improve partner search functionality and cooperation with Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)
• Provide support for Intellectual Property Right (IPR) management and protection

4.   Information Sharing and Support from National Contact Points (NCPs)

• Provide clear and accessible guidelines and support materials for researchers as well as NCPs
• Improve the interaction between the EC officials and NCPs, e.g. conduct regular workshops to keep NCPs updated on the latest developments and move beyond limited virtual Q&A sessions
• Improve distribution of information through ministries, institutional contact points and stakeholders; organise regular regional networking events
• Consider dedicated NCP support schemes or hubs for WB, e.g. support 'Horizon Offices', mentorship programmes, facilitating partnerships between WB NCPs and potential coordinators and consortia
• Increase resource allocation for NCPs and strengthen their professionalisation and continuity; enhance capacity building for project preparation and implementation
• Provide clear guidance taking into account national regulations, and encourage and enable NCPs to lobby for improved conditions at national and EU levels
• WB stakeholders highly appreciate the NCP networking projects but call for a more systemic approach with joint initiatives to share best practices and resources between NCPs

5. Proposal Preparation and Submission

- Further simplify application packages and reporting to lower barriers
- Align proposal sections with new funding schemes like lump sums
- Extend deadlines and the time that calls are open as far as possible
- Allow more pages to properly address cross-cutting issues, if these are relevant criteria for evaluation

6. Evaluation

- Maintain and advance impartial, transparent and professional evaluation processes
- Improve evaluator education on priorities and rules and publish the evaluator instructions
- Provide specific feedback and avoid generic comments
- Encourage more risk-taking and context-sensitivity in evaluations; involve field experts
- Consider re-introducing evaluator recommendations and allowing evaluator inputs to negotiations; in very high-stake areas, consider also hearings
- Accelerate the evaluation timeline in competitive thematic areas
- Increase the number of evaluators coming from WB; set and monitor geographical Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in relation to the involvement of evaluators, reviewers, etc.

7. Contracting

- Further simplify contracts as stakeholders appreciate standardised and simple contracts with electronic signatures
- Provide more templates like DESCA (Development of a Simplified Consortium Agreement), as they are very helpful, in particular for smaller entities
- Further improve support services like Research Enquiry Service (RES)

8. Implementing and Reporting

- Further simplify reporting processes
- Offer a choice between standardised, predictable reporting periods and flexible schedules tailored to the specific needs of a project
- Strengthen research management professions and skills locally
- Provide privileged access for NCPs to implementation guidance and project information

9. Remuneration and Payments

- Maintain quick pre-financing and payment mechanisms
- Allow for adaptations in case of high inflation
- Allow a choice between lump sums and full cost accounting; focus on cost transparency rather than lump sums
- Enable easy budget shifts between cost categories and between beneficiaries
- Enable compensation at institutional level; support loosening rigid policies and consider incentives for pioneering institutions and achievements
- Provide clear guidelines on project-based salary top-ups and address how low local salaries contribute to brain drain
- Provide clear guidelines on achieving objectives in lump sum projects

How we did it...

Our methodology: from research to recommendations through an engagement process

These recommendations are the result of an engagement process of key stakeholders, implementing a multi-method strategy integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches. The inquiry was divided into three phases, corresponding to the different methods applied.

1. Desk Analysis

This stage included reviewing the available reports from the European Commission (EC), the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) and the work conducted in the POLICY ANSWERS project, as for example the policy brief 'Overview of the Western Balkans Research and Innovation Performance in EU Programmes and Initiatives', the analysis of the map of the R&I stakeholder ecosystem, and the collection and analysis of good practices and initiatives, existing programmes and policies in the WB.

2. Qualitative Research

In-depth interviews with more than ten stakeholders in the region were focused on the question of what works well from their perspective in Horizon Europe and what they would like to see changed about the upcoming FP10.

3. Survey

In parallel to the qualitative phase, a survey was conducted during the first months of 2024 and 15 full questionnaires were collected. The survey contained eight questions:

1. Please share your most important messages about what works in Horizon Europe (what should be kept the same).
2. Please share your most important messages, such as what does not work in Horizon Europe (what should be changed).
3. What do you consider important about the ambition, vision and context of FP10?
4. What do you consider important about the guiding principles and cross-cutting issues for FP10?
5. What do you consider important about the management, structure and instruments of FP10?
6. What else should be considered when programming the next Framework Programme?
7. What has not been covered in the questionnaire above? Who should be involved?
8. Let us know a few thoughts about specific aspects of the Framework Programmes.

The suggested aspects of the Framework Programmes to be evaluated have been: Procedures of association to the FP; Pillar structure; Project types: Research and Innovation Action (RIA), Innovation actions (IA), Coordination and Support Action (CSA), etc.; Funding rates, funding mechanisms; Size of projects; Cross-cutting issues (open science, gender issues, ethics, etc.); Contractual issues; Implementation issues (e.g. time to grant, etc.); Evaluation processes, working as an expert; Agencies: European Research Executive Agency (REA), European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA), etc.; Portfolio approach; Roles of co-design and co-creation; Support provided, e.g. from National Contact Points (NCPs), multipliers; Tools provided, e.g. the Funding and Tenders Portal; European Research Council, European Innovation Council, etc.; Missions; EU Partnerships (co-funded, co-programmed, institutionalised); Widening participation, Widening participation and strengthening the European research area (WIDERA) programme; Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA); EIT (European Institute for Innovation and Technology); European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST); Research Infrastructures; Seal of excellence, second change of proposals from widening countries (including WB economies); Synergies with Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA); Simplification; any other issues.

For each of them, the questions were: What works? What should be changed? Why is it important?

Overview

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