

The Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW) warmly welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the European Commission's consultation procedure on the Green Paper "From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding".

The OeAW encourages the European Commission to define the term of innovation in a broad sense particularly including basic research as an indispensable prerequisite of any innovation. The innovation component offers enormous opportunities as long as it ensures that CSF primarily focuses on research. The OeAW advocates a strong emphasis on highly competitive programmes fostering and promoting creative individuals and disapproves any move towards a results-based funding regime contravening the idea of risky research.

This paper presents five key points and provides for recommendations on how to specify the propositions of the Green Paper and how to improve and further develop the existing funding schemes.

Excellence

The OeAW favours any measures boosting the potential of ERC embedding the principles of excellence and bottom up research in all disciplines. Thus, it endorses the strong and independent role of the ERC, supports the new Proof of Concept (PoC) and ERC Plus schemes and suggests that a significantly higher proportion of funding to be awarded to the ERC. ERC stands for encouraging (young) researchers to be part of the world-class excellence community in frontier research, implementing individual career development plans, strengthening the role of the principle investigator (PI). Both the Starting and Advanced Investigator Grants have proven in the past to yield excellent research.

The OeAW is strongly supportive of promoting the mobility of researchers as provided by Marie Curie Actions and is convinced they ought to remain within the competence of DG Research. We approve the continuation of Marie Curie Actions in order to guarantee brain circulation as an indispensable feature of the Innovation Union. We advise the streamlining of Marie Curie instruments and by way of strengthening the role of Initial Training Networks (ITN), Incoming International Fellowships (IIF), and Intra European Fellowships (IEF).

Flexibility

When identifying the Grand Challenges the voice of scholars has to be heard. Setting a clear agenda is of utmost importance. The research agenda has to be characterised by openness to recent developments and by preserving space for research into new and emerging areas. Synergies in programmes should be identified, successful instruments maintained. At the same time successful research consortia under FP7 ought to be secured further EU funding opportunities. Such follow-up projects should guarantee the sustainability of outstanding findings and thus the development of the full potential of previous work.

Women in Science

The OeAW favours any measures encouraging women to play an ever growing and active role and thus exploiting all opportunities the CSF provides for. We stress the necessity of covering childcare services enabling women to participate in EU events and EU conferences beyond normal work time (i.e. evening events and events of several days' duration out of town).

Simplification

The financial regulatory necessitates simplification by means of implementing a more trust-based system of regulation and thus, the acceptance of nationally approved certification, accounting, and management practices.

There is scope for simplification when it comes to cost models as well as auditing requirements. In terms of the actual indirect cost model we consider it beneficial to provide for an option to shift from actual to flat-rate and lump-sum models for indirect costs.

In order to achieve further improvements we consider the following steps essential: (1) standardisation of core rules and providing at the same time additional special clauses to address specific situations, (2) harmonisation of legal terminology, (3) defining consistent funding conditions e.g. funding rates, and (4) providing for a concise set of IP rules which must not jeopardise the right of individual participants to



use their own IP without impediment in spite of the need for open access and dissemination.

Participation of Third Party Countries

The Austrian Academy of Sciences argues for a priority setting in international scientific co-operation with a main focus on candidate countries, countries associated to the EU, and the BRIC and the creation of flexible framework conditions applicable to third countries cooperating under CSF.