

Recommendations on the future form of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme

by Polish National Contact Point for Research Programmes of the EU

NCP for the EIP Non-Financial Instruments:

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Introduction

Following recommendations are based on the 12-year experience acting as the National Contact Point for Research Programmes for the 5th, 6th and 7th FP, Euroatom as well as 4-year experience operating as NCP for the CIP EIP Non-Financial Instruments and ICT-PSP. Current activities of the NCP lies in providing services as trainings, workshops, consultations and expertise for potential beneficiaries on the 7th Framework Programme, Euroatom, EIP and ICT-PSP. What is more, the NCP participates in several projects under FP7, mostly CSA network projects for NCPs. Additionally, the NCP performs a project under Structural Funds aiming at postgraduate studies for future research and commercialization managers.

I. Future structure of the CIP Programme:

1.1 Sub-Programme “Innovation”

Facing the possible future merger of two Framework Programmes (7th FP and the CIP) in to one successor Framework Programme, current areas covered by the CIP should be gathered under the additional horizontal sub-programme “Innovation” (next to other sub-programmes of the 7th FP: Cooperation, People, Capacities and Ideas) to clearly distinguish the innovative actions from research ones. As the CIP actions aimed at first application and market replication, bridging the gap between research and the market, commercialization as well as promotion and support for innovative SMEs, its effectiveness will be guaranteed by separate Sub-Programme with its own decision making bodies as Programme Committees and National Contact Points as well as regulations and requirements.

1.2 Priority “Innovative SMEs”

Possible merger of the two Framework Programmes (7th FP and the CIP) threatens the main priority of the CIP – support for SMEs. As the experiences of the Framework Programme for Research and Development revealed, these are mostly medium and big enterprises involved in the performance of large scale and research projects due to their capacity and resources. The support for SMEs should be guaranteed by actions as first application, market replication and pilot projects dedicated directly to small and medium sized enterprises and gathered under one Priority called “Innovative SMEs” being a part of additional sub-programme “Innovation”. Moreover, the thematic scope of first application and market replication projects should cover new fields as e.g. Ageing well. Only the separate Priority will secure maintaining SMEs at the heart of the European research and innovation policy which is in line with flagship initiative of the Strategy “Europe 2020” – the Innovation Union.

1.3 Priority “Support for Innovative SMEs”

Actions and networks directed to the support for SMEs should be further developed as they are already well recognizable among SMEs and potential beneficiaries, and gathered under one Priority “Support for Innovative SMEs” being part of the sub-programme “Innovation”. These actions are: Europe INNOVA, Innovation Platforms, ProInno Europe, Network for the Sustainability of European Tourism and Enterprise Europe Network. Moreover, the Network should provide services on internationalization of SMEs. In case of the Enterprise Europe Network a close cooperation between the Network and NCPs for Innovation should be supported in order to provide multi-thematic expertise on research and innovation for SMEs according to the “no wrong door” principle.

1.4 NCPs for Innovation

In order to foster the performance of the Priority “Innovation” and support cooperation between SMEs and other relevant stakeholders at the European and international level, a network of NCPs for the sub-programme Innovation as well as its priorities should be

established. This would be in line with the practice performed under 7th Framework Programme – each priority has well developed network of NCPs and the NCPs are well recognizable and highly valued by the beneficiaries. Additionally, specific actions for NCPs networks animation should be designed in order to facilitate the international cooperation in the field of innovation.

1.5 Innovative actions involving third countries

Future innovative actions should involve the cooperation with and participation of third countries similarly to the actions already performed under the 7th Framework Programme as e.g. collaborative projects under Cooperation including multilateral cooperation and financial support for ICPC countries. This is justified by the demand on the side of European SMEs and other relevant stakeholders as well as the necessity of participation in the international dialog on innovation.

As the study carried out by the Polish NCP on “Better use and contribution from the CIP to S&T Policy” performed within the 7th Framework Programme INCO NET EECA (cooperation between EU and Eastern Europe and Central Asian on Science and Technology Policy) revealed, there is a huge interest on the side of third countries to cooperate with EU in the field of innovation e.g. technology transfer. Example: the Enterprise Europe Network is already operating in Russia and Armenia facilitation cooperation with European SMEs, however without obtaining any financial contribution from the EU.

1.6 Mangers/ Brokers of Innovation

Under the new Framework Programme special scheme for enhancement of human potential in the field of managing innovative and commercialization projects should be developed both in research and enterprises sector in form of e.g.: multi-thematic trainings for projects coordinators and exchange of managing staff between leading innovative projects. The development of new skills will foster the application of research result by SMEs, industry but as well by spin-outs and spin-offs created by research institutions.

II. Synergies between European funds, harmonization of procedures

2.1 Synergies between research and innovative actions under Framework Programmes

Thematic synergy between actions aiming at research and innovation is required in order to enable the implementation of research result and successful introduction of new solutions on the market. Examples:

- first application and market replication projects under CIP eco-innovation initiative should enable the implementation of research result elaborated under the priorities of the Cooperation sub-programme within the 7th FP (e.g.: in the Environment Priority).

- pilot projects under CIP ICT-PSP should enable the implementation of results elaborated under the priorities of the Cooperation sub-programme within the 7th FP (e.g.: in the ICT Priority).
- projects currently financed under the Intelligent Energy Europe should promote and disseminate solutions elaborated under the priorities of the Cooperation sub-programme within the 7th FP (e.g.: in the Energy Priority).
- SMEs taking part in the scheme “Research for the benefits of SMEs” of the 7th FP should be encouraged implementing the results in the economy by in relevant application and pilot projects.

In order to foster the implementation of research results and introduction of new solutions on the market, one should consider including into research projects simplified commercialization plan with potential market analysis for new solutions already in the phase of the project submission. Additionally, thematic synergy implies harmonization of Work Programmes with specific topics and time schedule.

One of the good practices of the thematic synergy between 7th FP and CIP applied by a large company:

Mostostal Warszawa S.A. – large enterprise operating in all basic sectors of the construction market has performed projects under the three European Programmes: 7th FP and CIP. Examples of synergies in the field of transport: Industrialized construction process of polymer based composite bridges (TRANS-IND, FP7), Used tyres valorisation as lightweight filler for embankments (Rectyre, CIP-Eco-Innovation).

2.2 Harmonization of procedures within Framework Programmes

Application procedures should be standardized, however protecting exceptions in justified cases as e.g. in actions on Innovative SMEs an international consortium should be only one of the options as the eligibility criteria for submission of proposals.

The category costs should be unified as well as financial procedures further simplified. In case of the VAT – it should constitute an ineligible cost unless the entity justifies that it cannot recover it. The issue of the VAT is of a great importance for the enterprise sector - main beneficiary of the CIP and future Framework Programme.

Submission of proposals should proceed via common Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS); one account should be valid for all actions under Framework Programmes.

2.3 Synergies between Framework Programmes and Structural Funds

In the current perspective (2007-2013) there is a huge discrepancy regarding financial requirements and statements between projects performed under Framework Programmes and Structural Funds due to the fact that Structural Funds are managed by each Member

States using its own regulations. As the practice revealed SF put more administrative burdens on SMEs than FPs. What is more, there are no thematic synergies facilitating the continuity or development of funded projects as well as building of a long-term strategy.

Therefore, actions aiming at simplification and unification of requirements and procedures should be introduced. Administrative simplification should be accompanied by the thematic synergy between instruments in order to enable potential beneficiaries applying within different European funds for different stage of the projects. The harmonization works should be speed up and focused more on small and medium sized enterprises.

So far there are mostly regions using synergies between European funds as they have sufficient reassures and financial capacity. In the current perspective, synergies by a single SME are hardly to find. Examples:

Lodz Region (Central Poland): in the field of R&D&I entities situated in the region carried out following projects: Structural funds (Operational Programmes at the national level, Regional Operational Programme for the Lodz Region): support for R&D units, enhancement of innovation and competitiveness of enterprises, support of R&D in enterprises, development of SMEs; 7th Framework Programme (Cooperation research projects performed at the Technical University of Lodz); CIP-ICT-PSP (pilot projects performed by several stakeholders); CIP IEE (dissemination projects performed by Technical University of Lodz).

III. Other actions/schemes supporting the Programme:

- Detailed Statistics on participation of member countries in selected actions all CIP actions are necessary to measure the participation of entities, compare the progress, and overtake certain actions to e.g. increase the success rate. Additionally, statistics measure the activity of NCPs promoting Innovative actions and providing services to entities on participation in Innovative actions.
- List of financed projects with short description – these case studies can be used as examples projects and promoted within the country.
- Regular meetings of NCPs – as the Framework Programme involved consortia consisting of entities from various member states, meeting of NCPs are necessary to built the efficient cooperation between countries involved in the Innovative actions. It facilitates exchange of information as well as partner search for the projects.
- Actions dedicated to the NCPs network – actions aiming at preparation of analysis on the countries' SMEs market as well as at facilitation of cooperation between NCPs will result in the increase of projects, better quality of projects and technology transfer.
- Trainings for NCPs on pilot and market replication projects within eco-innovation – trainings on project preparation and evaluation will increase the level of expertise

of NCPs and support the EACI staff in the every-day project consultations. It would be also advisable to organize training visits of NCPs to institutions realizing projects financed under CIP to create the environment for exchanging ideas and expertise, between beneficiaries of the Programme and institutions responsible for its implementation.

- Annual CIP conference – an annual conference where the Work Programme will be presented is necessary for providing relevant information to the stakeholders and creating an environment for multilateral meetings, which will foster the cooperation between all NCPs, stakeholders and beneficiaries ;
- Access for NCPs to documents on CIRCA – the NCPs will have the access to up-dated and accurate information.