

Response of the Research Councils UK (RCUK) to the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme Consultation

1. Synergies between the research Framework Programme and CIP

- 1.1 The UK Research Councils would potentially welcome the incorporation of the research and innovation-related actions covered by the CIP into the next Framework Programme, although stress this would need to be managed carefully in order to limit additional complexity. A combined programme should offer a coherent and streamlined set of instruments.
- 1.2 It is crucial that the next Framework Programme for Research & Technological Development, covers all aspects of the research and innovation chain – from fundamental research, through applied research, to exploitation activities.
- 1.3 Incorporating relevant elements of the current CIP into the next Framework Programme would potentially address the gap that currently exists between FP7 and CIP and would promote closer synergies between research activities and exploitation of research results. It is recognised that within the current programmes this gap is already starting to be addressed to some extent; for example, the DEMO activity under the ‘Research for the Benefit of SMEs’ strand of FP7, which funds the development of the results of projects funded previously under this programme. Activities of this type within the current programmes are welcomed, and can be built on in the next generation of programmes.
- 1.4 Any merger of the current programmes would need to be done extremely carefully to avoid proliferation of schemes, unnecessary complexity, and confusion by the research community. It should be recognised that CIP currently has very different instruments and funding models to the research Framework Programme. It is important that should these be carried over into a new Framework Programme, they are thoroughly explained; the landscape of instruments needs to be clear and accessible to potential beneficiaries.
- 1.5 Therefore, a thorough analysis of which elements should be incorporated into a future Framework Programme, and which would be more appropriately positioned elsewhere, should be carried out at the earliest planning stage.
- 1.6 A merger of the two programmes (CIP and FP7) from 2014 should not result in a decrease in the overall proportion of the EU budget allocated to research and innovation. There is a need to maintain the overall level of funding for all aspects of research and innovation; this includes basic research, which, whilst not ‘commercial’ as such, does play an essential role in the innovation chain.

2. Exploitation of Research Results

- 2.1 Under a combined strategic research and innovation framework there could be scope to provide additional funding for the exploitation of research results emerging from EU funded research projects in all areas.
- 2.2 Currently the CIP supports the exploitation of Energy and ICT research through the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) and Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE), but the expansion of such a model this to other areas should be considered.

- 2.3 It should be recognised that although the FP7 ICT thematic area and ICT PSP programmes are separate in terms of their legal basis, the same Commission officials within the relevant units work together on FP7 and CIP, and this is something that would be encouraged across all areas. Indeed, a single programme covering research and innovation should provide an opportunity for more such joined-up working.
- 2.4 Thus, the next multi-annual Framework Programme could provide an opportunity to explore concrete mechanisms for systematically exploiting research results from EU-funded research projects in all areas.
- 2.5 Funding should be ideally be governed by a one set of Rules of Participation. However, for specific cases where a variation from the standard rules is essential then this should be clearly communicated to all beneficiaries and their organisations, explaining the reasoning behind the variation.

3. IPR Helpdesk

- 3.1 The IPR helpdesk is a valuable resource in its current form and its European co-financing should be continued in the next multiannual financial framework.

4. General

- 4.1 Further stakeholder consultation throughout the development process of the successor to the CIP would be strongly encouraged.

RCUK is the strategic partnership of the UK's seven Research Councils. Further information can be found at www.rcuk.ac.uk.

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