

# Evaluation of ERA NET Cofund actions under Horizon 2020

Presentation of the results

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# Part of the H2020 Interim evaluation

## Timeline:

**May :** Adaption of the Staff Working Document on the Interim Evaluation of H2020

**June:** ERAC opinion and European Parliament Assessment

**July:** report from the High Level Group / Lamy Group on maximising the impact of EU R&I Programmes.  
Stakeholder Conference 3 July (Shaping our Future)

**October :** Commission Communication on the Interim Evaluation



# Evaluation of P2P's

- ▶ JPI's: 2015
- ▶ ERA-NETs: 2016
- ▶ Art. 185 initiatives :October 2017

# Purpose and scope of the ERA-NET evaluation

- The assessment covers the 27 ERA-NET Cofund Actions approved for funding under the 2014 /2015 WP of Horizon 2020.
- The evaluation will contribute to:
  - Improving the implementation of ERA-NET Cofund actions
  - adapting the instrument to the needs and policy objectives
- Evaluation criteria: **efficiency, relevance** and coherence, **effectiveness, EU added value.**
- The results will feed into the Horizon 2020 interim evaluation and will use for the preparation of the next FP.

# Methodology

75  
interviews

50.3 %  
response  
rate

Stakeholder type	Interviews	On line survey	Workshop
ERA-NET Cofund Coordinators	X	X	X
ERA-NET Cofund Participants	X	X	X
National Representatives	X	X	
JPI Chairs	X		
EC high-level officials	X		
EC project officers	X		X
ERA-NET Cofund evaluators	X		
Supported by desk research, analysis of existing and new data			

# Main findings

# Efficiency

- The instrument has been simplified and allows a lot of flexibility.
- However there are several issues that cause difficulties in the management of the instrument such as:
  - lack of clear understanding of the financial aspects of the instrument
  - ineligibility of the management costs
  - discrepancies in the way some European Commission project officers manage the Cofund actions
- Another recurring issue is the optimization of the use of Commission and MS budgets in the implementation of the joint calls.

# Relevance and coherence

- From the Commission's perspective, ERA-NETs are used to mobilise additional resources to achieve EU objectives (implementation of joint calls that lead to the funding of transnational research projects).
  - Still efforts needed to improve coordination and synergies among various networks in the same area.
  - ERA-NET Cofund Actions are not deeply embedded in national policy portfolios and/or national strategies .
  - Incompatible rules of participation and funding at national level may create problems.
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# Effectiveness

- ERA-NET Cofund has been able to mobilize national resources to tackle EU challenges.
  - Coordination of existing programmes is achieved (although not to the level of aligning national strategies /programmes).
  - The instrument has facilitated widening participation to lower performing countries, although there are several areas of improvement.
  - ERA-NET Cofund actions are also gradually strengthening the international dimension with an increasing number of participating third countries since FP7.
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# EU added value

- The added value of ERA-NET Cofund primarily lies in strengthening trans-national collaboration. ERA-NETs contribute to achieving a critical mass of resources with the calls they implement.
  - Its contribution to the alignment of national policies is rather limited.
  - ERA-NET Cofund contributes to developing cooperation with international partners and third countries.
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# Main recommendations

# Main recommendations

## **1. More focus on the strategic potential for ERA-NET Cofund actions in the process of designing the H2020 WPs and at national level**

- COM to develop and implement long-term strategies for ERA-NET Cofund
- ERA-NET Cofund actions subject to fulfilment of clear criteria and conditions including strong financial upfront commitments from participating States.
- MS need to integrate the ERA-NET Cofund instrument in their national strategy portfolios, with a strong and longer-term financial and political commitment to public-public partnerships.

## **2. Change the design of the instrument to better reflect the level of ambition in the collaboration and commitment of the participants**

- The flexibility of the definition at the level of the General Annexes and the drafting of topics should be used to better reflect the level of ambition.

# Main recommendations

- 3. Improve efficiency of implementation by stepping-up the learning curve with sharing knowledge, experience and good practices**
    - Guidance on the preparation and implementation of the ERA-NET Cofund actions should be further improved, notably within the ERA LEARN 2020 context. The visibility of ERA-LEARN 2020 and of the important services it provides needs to be improved.
  - 4. Efficient management of the Union and national contributions**
    - Complete absorption of Union contribution is a major concern. Any funded actions to include at least 25% reserve to reduce the risk of underspending
  - 5. Better exploit ERA-NET Cofund actions for the widening strategy**
    - Participating States and the Commission should promote a proactive approach engaging low-performing countries at a very early stage of designing ERA-NET Cofund Actions
  - 6. Improve knowledge and valorise impacts of ERA-NET Cofund Actions and funded projects**
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# Long-term recommendation (FP9)

**Future Framework Programme needs to continue supporting programme level collaboration. Support to P2Ps should be an adaptable scheme:**

- a “softer” approach in areas where objectives can be achieved by mainly providing longer-term financial support to management and coordination via coordination and support actions (CSA);
- a strong “cofounding” approach for mature networks with strong long-term financial commitment from PS and high relevance for FP objectives. In these cases the future instrument should allow full flexibility concerning the range of activities (including multiple cofunded calls), the variety of stakeholders involved (research funders as well as governmental research performing organisations) and the level of Union contribution in order to ensure the achievement of a critical mass of resources and actors.
  - **Consider to further simplify the toolbox by designing one comprehensive Cofund instrument**
  - **re-consider eligibility of costs of financial instruments in the context of Cofund actions and revise the Financial Regulation**

# What has happened after the evaluation?

## **New conditions and Criteria for support to JPIs and ERA-NETs in the H2020 WP 2018–20**

- ▶ Link to the strategic orientation of the WP 2018–20
  - ▶ Non-duplication and clear synergies / division of labour with other activities of H2020
  - ▶ Clear financial commitment ( Division between mature ERA-Nets and new topics)
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Thank you for your attention!

I wish you all a good  
workshop

