



**- DLR Position Paper -**  
**The FP7 ex-post evaluation**



## **Introduction and Background**

As aeronautics and space issues can only be solved on European and international level, DLR is cooperating on European scale since the early 70ies of the previous century. As consequence DLR is increasingly participating in European Research projects starting with the 3<sup>rd</sup> EU-Framework Programme on research. In the recently published 7th Monitoring Report of FP7 DLR is ranked No. 14 in the overall participation ranking list of FP7. With its more than 400 project participations DLR is a major player in European research and thus would like to contribute to the FP7 Ex-post evaluation questionnaire with an additional written contribution based on its years of experience.

The available position is structured according to the following scheme:

- FP7 Administration
- FP7 Programming
- FP7 Proposal evaluation and execution
- FP7 Achievements / Impact
- European added value

## **FP7 Administration**

With respect to administration (and simplification) there are several positive developments in FP7 compared to FP6. The single registration unit is a good achievement, as all applicants of an organisation worked with the same fundamental set of data and documents. However, the maintainance of data within the Unique Registration Facility (URF) needs to be improved and simplified, as several changes took a very long time to become effective in the URF. In the same way the Research Participants Portal and the Web Based electronic system for negotiation became useful tools and simplified the workload within FP7.

With respect to reporting DLR welcomes some simplifications in FP7. As a good example one can mention that information prepared in the technical reporting on use of resources was taken over into financial reporting. However, there was no unique interpretation of these reporting guidelines by the various EC officers, which lead to misunderstandings and additional work. A reporting should follow clear rules.

However in some other administrative measures DLR has experienced a worsening of the situation compared to FP6. Noteworthy are the use of average personnel costs, the certification of methodology and others.

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## **FP7 Programming**

The general goals of the EU Framework programme for research are increasing excellent scientific research and technology development in order to prepare innovation and therefore boost the European economy. All four specific programmes in FP7 contributed to these two named goals with different scope. Whereas the ideas programme was focused on scientific excellence the cooperation programme was focused more on technology development for technical and societal innovation. Therefore the Cooperation programme has had also an impact on the European economy by improving European cross border cooperation. The capacity programme had also a dedicated impact on regional development. Society and Environment issues have also been addressed in general, but the main impact of FP7 in these areas resulted from dedicated parts of specific programmes like priority 6 Environment and Climate Change or priority 8 Socio-economic sciences and humanities with the Science in Society programme.

The FP7 programmatic approach was - to a large extent - based on commonly agreed European Research Strategies elaborated and approved by all stakeholders. Therefore it was the European instrument to implement European research strategies, while harmonising with national research schemes. In particular the priorities of the cooperation programme addressed major societal challenges like transport, energy, security, environment and health. This largely continued in the new framework programme Horizon 2020 and was used as guideline also for national research strategies mentioning the German High tech Strategy as one example.

## **FP7 Proposal preparation and evaluation**

Calls and topics in the work programmes of FP7 were well defined and outlined in both scope and expected outcome of future projects. This guidance facilitated the matching of project ideas to the individual subjects of calls and eased the effort to apply for funding.

A strength of FP7 was a sound, objective and transparent evaluation process, with knowledgeable and experienced research experts, which have been selected carefully by the European Commission's scientific officers based on their sound knowledge of the specific research systems. Evaluations followed a transparent procedure with adequate briefings and consensus meetings that led to sound evaluation results in terms of a fair competition.

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### **FP7 Achievements / Impact**

FP7 allowed research stakeholders to work more effectively on joint research programmes by using additional funding to perform research projects together with partners from all stakeholders using their research capabilities and know-how in order to reach earlier and more effective research and innovation results. In particular the cooperation programme with its variety of collaborative research projects (small ones for technology development, medium ones for technology validation and big ones for system demonstration) supported the entire research and innovation process. This led to an in depth European wide cooperation on research (transnational cooperation), which formed the basis for further cooperation within the framework programmes and beyond.

As politically agreed the European framework programme has to be complementary to national research programmes which are focused on the national competitiveness. Thus FP7 created in particular with its Cooperation programme an European added value. With the networks and consortia created in collaborative research projects, FP7 also contributed to circulation, access to and transfer of scientific knowledge as different stakeholders like universities, research organisations, SMEs and industry were working together on a level playing field. This was demonstrated by the fact that collaborative research projects could be coordinated by anyone amongst the stakeholders. This is a big advantage compared to e.g. H2020, where in dedicated parts of the H2020 programme only specific stakeholders are entitled to lead dedicated actions like JTI's led by Industry or, ERC projects led mainly by academia. In that sense FP7 helped to overcome stakeholder's silos, which are now being recreated by the structure of H2020.

Furthermore FP7 (in particular the aeronautical programme) was very important to implement European Research Strategies prepared and approved by all stakeholders like the ACARE Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) for aeronautics research. These European strategies produced by European Technology Platforms with the support of FP7-CSAs were used as guidelines for European (FP7), national (e.g. German Aeronautical Programme) and regional public and private research programmes. Therefore the concept of FP7 with its cooperation programme and its support to ETPs led to European agenda setting and harmonisation of European research efforts.

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### **European added value**

The core of FP7, the Cooperation programme, aimed at and succeeded in better pooling of resources and thus improving European science and technology capabilities. Within the various priorities of the cooperation programme pan-European challenges were successfully addressed like transport, energy, security, environment, space and health. Furthermore with the support of FP7 to European Technology Platforms it helped harmonising national research programmes. E.g. ACARE's SRA is/was the guideline for national programmes like LuFO, CORAG, ACARE-Italy and other national initiatives. In the same way the big PPPs like Clean Sky, SESAR and FCH contributed to better harmonisation of European research efforts. With its cooperation programme FP7 contributed to reduce the financial risk of research and fostered private and public research investments, while disseminating research results on European scale and avoided duplication. Last but not least with its people programme FP7 contributed to researchers' mobility and thus an integration and understanding of Europe's cultural diversity.

### **Conclusion and recommendation**

According to DLR's experience FP7 has been working towards European goals. It fostered, in particular with its Cooperation programme, European Transnational Cooperation and thus contributed to the development of the European Research Area. Furthermore it increased European competitiveness and leadership as the entire research and development process with its variety of research instruments was covered. DLR would like to propose to preserve the core of FP7, the cooperation programme with its variety of research instruments, also as core for future framework programmes. Experience shows that knowledge transfer is best facilitated by cooperation of all research stakeholders (Universities, Research organisations, SMEs and Industry and others) on a level playing field.

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## **DLR at a glance**

DLR is the national aeronautics and space research centre of the Federal Republic of Germany. Its extensive research and development work in aeronautics, space, energy, transport and security is integrated into national and international cooperative ventures. In addition to its own research, as Germany's space agency, DLR has been given responsibility by the federal government for the planning and implementation of the German space programme. DLR is also the umbrella organisation for the nation's largest project management agency.

DLR has approximately 8000 employees at 16 locations in Germany: Cologne (headquarters), Augsburg, Berlin, Bonn, Braunschweig, Bremen, Goettingen, Hamburg, Juelich, Lampoldshausen, Neustrelitz, Oberpfaffenhofen, Stade, Stuttgart, Trauen, and Weilheim. DLR also has offices in Brussels, Paris, Tokyo and Washington D.C.

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