



DLR Recommendations

On

the European Commission's
proposal of Horizon Europe



Motivation

Investments in Research and Innovation are key drivers of EU-Priorities. The pursuit of industrial leadership to maintain and extend European prosperity and growth depend dearly on a committed pan-European research and innovation strategy. Its impactful outcome boosts jobs throughout the union and strengthens European competitiveness on the global market.

The pressing societal challenges demand new solutions to find sustainable solutions. Climate change as well as safe and secure energy for all Europeans are just two examples to demonstrate the need for European solutions that only a comprehensive European Research and Innovation Programme focussing on excellent cross-border collaboration in multi-disciplinary approaches can address.

The crucial role of Research and Innovation activities to support and boost industrial leadership is now at the heart of European research and innovation policy with the ultimate goal to benefit society. Hence it is utmost crucial to implement an effective, efficient and impactful strategy succeeding Horizon 2020.

DLR welcomes the effort and commitment that is expressed in the European Commission's proposal for the future framework programme Horizon Europe. As much as we appreciate the contingency and evolutionary development succeeding the current framework programme, we see some aspects that need to be considered to extent and maximise the success of Horizon Europe.

DLR's recommendations on the European Commission's proposal of Horizon Europe

The current proposal assumes a budget of roughly 100 billion € for the next period. **This budget is not sufficient.** It clearly misses the 3%-GD-target of the EU. The significance of funding and its correlation with impact and relation to its effectiveness has been clearly described, e.g. in the LAB-FAB-APP-report. This aspect is particularly critical as Horizon Europe is burdened with more topics (e.g. defence and security, migration), the new mission-oriented approach and the European Innovation Council. In this light **DLR calls for an increased budget of Horizon Europe** in line with the LAB-FAB-APP report to shape a better European future.

It is hard to understand that the current proposal omits the chance to define the specific budget breakdown with the clusters. The political emphasis on specific topics should be expressed in corresponding budget lines within the clusters. The **vagueness on exactly which topics and technologies will be supported, and with how much of the budget makes the proposal hard to assess and shifts the responsibility to the strategic programming.** This structural shift of responsibility away from the EU Parliament and EU Council is hard to justify in regard to long term commitment of partners and private investment into a long term program for research

and innovation. The proposal would **win from a clear budget breakdown defining priorities** within the clusters even on a high level. Given the large number of European Technology and Innovation Platforms as well as established advisory councils, and their members' wish to implement their on wide European scale agreed Strategic Research and Innovation Agendas via the framework program, **calls for proposals should continue to be prescriptive, reflecting the level of detail provided by stakeholders**. This will ensure proper implementation of European R&I strategies as well as limit oversubscription. Lump sums should only be applied where pilot schemes have proven their feasibility.

DLR understands the brevity and limited degree of detail of this legislation. However, the above mentioned vagueness in combination with lacking references to well established and widely accepted EU strategies hampers the efficient continuation of long term commitments and partnerships. The latter effectively structure sectors around strong ecosystems that deliver impactful programmes and innovations leading to European market growth, job creation, enhanced international competitiveness and benefits to society. In this context **DLR explicitly calls for the continuation of iPPPs as they implement long-term strategies with indisputable socio-economic impact** allowing for global competitiveness.

With respect to both the mission-oriented approach as well as the European Innovation Council **it is important to maintain a proper balance within the research and innovation chain (TRL level)**. It is crucial to strengthen the entire Research and Innovation Chain from basic research, technology development, and verification up to innovation covering all TRLs instead of shifting the focus only towards the highest technology readiness level to push for an instant success in innovation. Neglecting the lower levels of research will dry out the innovation landscape in mid- and long term.

DLR welcomes the concept of missions in research and innovation. After the multi-year discussions, high-level advisory and endorsement by the European Commission addressing mission in research and innovation **it is disappointing to notice the absence of a stringent concept for missions in the Horizon Europe proposal**. There are still many questions regarding missions unanswered. This unclarity makes the legislative proposal difficult to assess. In that sense DLR would like to highlight that the essential role of missions in Horizon Europe should be the development of the technical foundations by means of research and innovation to address the high-level goals and that consequently implementation/deployment is not part of a framework program for research and innovation. DLR agrees that substantial funding for missions is needed to pursue a measurable impact that is easily understandable by the broad society. However, **DLR calls for a significant budget for collaborative research** in Pillar II which might be endangered by the mission-oriented approach.

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 one of the nation's largest project management agency.

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