



Task 4.1 Designing a Typology of Alignment

Caroline Lesser
INRA/ FACCE-JPI Secretariat
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Objectives

- Develop a common understanding of what alignment is and **how to implement** it in public-to-public partnerships
- **Map and categorise** alignment actions/instruments currently in use, including to promote alignment *across P2P initiatives*
- Identify **strengths and weaknesses** of different alignment actions/ instruments
- Develop an in-depth assessment (next step)



Build on the work of the “Groupe de Programmation Conjointe” to provide practical advice for practitioners

Background

- **2008:** “Joint Programming” concept endorsed by Council to support the European Research Area
- **2008:** Establishment of the High Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC) under ERAC
- **2010:** Launch of the first “Joint Programming Initiatives” (JPIs)
- **2013:** Establishment of the GPC Working Group on Alignment
- **2015:** Set-up of the GPC Implementation Group on Alignment and Inter-Operability



The implementation of Joint Programming relies on “alignment” yet **no clear understanding** of what this means!

Definition of alignment

“Alignment is the strategic approach taken by Member States to modify their national [research] programmes, priorities or activities as a consequence of the adoption of joint research priorities in the context of Joint Programming, with a view to improving the efficiency of investment in research at the level of Member States and the European Research Area”.

(GPC Working Group on Alignment, 2014)



Key goals and features of alignment

- **Main goals:**
 - ✓ Optimally using existing national research funds
 - ✓ Addressing societal (global) challenges more effectively
 - ✓ Structuring & strengthening the European Research Area
- Alignment is **not only** about organising joint calls for research. Can be achieved via various (joint) actions !
- Successful alignment combines “bottom-up” (researchers, RPO) & “top-down” actions (Ministry, RFO)
- **Key barrier at operational level:** inter-operability of national rules for funding & executing research (*focus of a different Task*)

Typology: Overview

- The typology identifies **29 modalities** currently in use by public-to-public partnerships that facilitate alignment (« alignment actions & instruments »)
- These can be undertaken during various stages of the **research programming cycle**
- Different actions are often **complementary** to each other. Some can be conducted **in parallel** (launch of joint call + sharing of research infrastructure)
- The typology is constructed using an excel sheet with **12 different categories** (*gives the possibility to filter results*)

Typology: Structure

1. **Short description** of the action
2. **Overall approach** (strategic, operational, financial)
3. **Actors involved** (policymakers, research financing organisations, research performing organisations, individual researchers)
4. **Mode of cooperation** (e.g., programme integration, institutional cooperation, networking amongst researchers, etc.)
5. **Intensity** (1, 2, 3), e.g., network of RPOs vs. a joint research centre; shared use of existing infrastructure vs. establishment of a common infrastructure facility
- 6a. **Instruments** on which the action relies (e.g., ERANETs, Knowledge Hubs, COST, open data strategy, etc.)

- 6b. Existence of a **dedicated EU instrument** (yes/no)
7. **Financing** of the action (participating countries –cash, in-kind; and/or the EC)
8. **Implementation** (short explanation of the steps usually involved and web link to further information)
9. **Benefits/ Strengths** (*to be further elaborated*)
10. **Weaknesses/ Challenges** (*to be further elaborated*)
11. **Examples**

Example 1: Conduct of joint mapping (*Research planning*)

- *Description:* Joint mapping is an activity that aims to identify and map national research programmes & identify possible research gaps amongst participating countries
- *Approach:* Operational
- *Actors:* Research funding and implementation organisations
- *Cooperation mode:* Joint analysis
- *Instruments:* Posters; joint mapping meetings (no dedicated EC instrument)
- *Financing:* Member-States, sometimes with EC support (Coordination and Support Action)

Example 1: Conduct of joint mapping (*Research planning*) (cont.)

- *Benefits/ Strengths:*
 - Promotes greater transparency
 - Helps avoid duplication of research
 - Helps identify research gaps and understand how research is conducted across various countries
 - Promotes networking amongst experts
- *Weakenesses/ Challenges:* Challenge in identifying and engaging adequate experts across countries
- *Examples:* Water JPI mapping exercise; SNOWMAN Network mapping exercise in the area of sustainable soil and water management

Example 2: Establishment of a research alliance (*Research implementation*)

- *Description*: Cooperation amongst research performing organisations that coordinate and align in-kind and project-based funding to spur more effective utilisation of existing (national) resources
- *Approach*: Operational
- *Actors*: Research implementation organisations
- *Cooperation mode*: Institutional cooperation
- *Instruments*: Memorandum of understanding, joint programme of work (no dedicated EC instrument)
- *Financing*: Member-States (in-kind)



Example 2: Establishment of a research alliance (*Research implementation*) (cont.)

- *Benefits/Strengths:*
 - Promotes greater synergies across countries' national research activities
 - Increases the international visibility of participating institutions
 - Contributes to networking and capacity building amongst researchers and to cross-fertilisation of ideas
 - Complements financial alignment
- *Weaknesses/Challenges:* Needs to bridge diverging institutional structures and procedures
- *Examples:* Urban Europe Research Alliance, European Energy Research Alliance (EERA)



Thank you for your attention!

We will be discussing in greater detail selected alignment actions and instruments in the next session