

GPC Implementation Group 1, “Fostering and mentoring JPIs”

Final report



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Summary

Tasks

GPC Implementation Group 1 (IG1, “Fostering and mentoring JPIs”) was created to:

1. Implement the recommendations of the GPC Working Groups 1 “Fostering the relationships between GPC and the JPIs” and 2 “Framework Conditions”
2. To establish a forum for exchange of information/and coordination between JPIs and between JPIs/GPC/European stakeholders
3. To work towards the advancement of implementation of the Framework Conditions

Implementation and outcome

The reports of the before mentioned GPC working groups form an excellent starting point for recommendations of the further development of the JPP. The report of WG1 “GPC and JPIs” was based on a survey under the actors of the JPP. It points to a number of shortcomings of the JPP as experienced by the respondents from JPIs, GPC and the Commission. The report of WG2 “Framework Conditions” proposes a distinction between the partly revised “Framework Conditions”, renaming them “Joint Programming Functions” and an “Enabling environment for Joint Programming”.

The work of IG1 focused on the role of the actors of the JPP and how the JPP could be implemented better with an improved interaction between JPIs, GPC and the Commission. Main focus was on the GPC and its delegates as member state representatives and on their specific function in implementing the JPP. Representing the member states, being in the driving seat to implement Joint Programming, GPC and its delegates are recommended to play a more active role, building up on the tasks defined by the Competitiveness Council¹, when Joint programming was started.

A paper with recommendations for the actors in the JPP was drafted by IG1 and used as the background for the document "Tasks and profile of GPC delegates"². This document was adopted by the GPC and it specifies the role of the GPC-delegates in the JPP. IG1 promoted interaction of the GPC with ERA-learn and the JPIs. This interaction is crucial to foster the JPP.

Conclusions

A much stronger interplay between the actors of the JPP is needed to further advance Joint Programming and the JPIs. The analysis undertaken by IG1 shows that, while JPIs have made remarkable progress, there appears to be significant room for further action regarding GPC. According to its new mandate³, GPC shall have a more active role in the future. Ideally, GPC acts as a platform of MS and AS with the aim of facilitating the JPP being an intermediate between politics, policies and practice. Taking into account that Joint Programming is a voluntary process, IG1 recommends GPC members to play an active role in strengthening the commitment by member states and associated countries in order to help it to reach its full potential. GPC shall be supportive in creating a favourable environment for the implementation of JPIs and shall support the implementation of the Framework Conditions for Joint programming by the JPIs, as well as the further development of the Joint Programming Process as a whole. In this context, JPIs must be recognised as a key actor for the respective societal challenge by member states and by the Commission and must be given the resources needed.

¹ RECH 441, COMPET 551, Conclusions concerning joint programming of research in Europe in response to the major societal challenges (2891st Competitiveness Council meeting, 2 December 2008)

² ERAC-GPC 1305/15 "Keeping GPC up to the job - Task and profile of GPC delegates"

³ ERAC-GPC 1352/16, adopted by GPC in the meeting on the 12th of February 2016.

Mandate and composition of IG1

Mandate and role of IG1 in the context of the JPP

The mandate of IG1 “Fostering and Mentoring JPIs” was to advise the GPC on the practical implementation of the recommendations provided for by the GPC ad hoc Working Groups on GPC and JPIs and on Framework Conditions. Furthermore its task was, on request of the GPC, take effective action in implementing those recommendations. The tasks of IG1 formed part of a process of exploring new ways of working for GPC, and were complemented by two more implementation groups:

IG2 “Alignment and Improving Interoperability” had to build up on the key recommendations of the WGs” Alignment” and “Framework Conditions”. Its tasks were to focus on the advancement of Alignment in the context of Joint Programming as defined by the Alignment WG as well as on improving the interoperability of national and European programs and activities.

IG3 “Monitoring JPIs” had to design and implement a monitoring process to ‘measure’ the impact that each JPI, that the GPC, and that the JPP as a whole had on the selected challenges JPIs are dealing with. Background of the work of IG3 was that the concept of Joint Programming was developed with the aim of impacting on major challenges which cannot be realistically and successfully tackled at single-country level.

Together, the three IGs were mandated to contribute to a further development of the JPP after several years since the process has been launched and the 10 JPIs are operational since 4 to 6 years.

Tasks of IG1

According to its mandate⁴, the tasks of IG1 were to build on the key recommendations of the WG on “Framework Conditions” and “GPC and JPIs” and oversee their implementation. Its focus was on the cooperation between the different stakeholders (JPI, Member States (MS)/Associated Countries (AC), GPC and EC and on the implementation of Framework Conditions. This had to include supporting the JPIs in implementing the full Joint Programming cycle, including those issues that have not received sufficient attention so far, such as use of knowledge, knowledge transfer or innovation. While respecting the specificities of the different challenges and different methods of implementation, the guiding principle was that JPIs are part of an overall Joint Programming Process (JPP) and have been tasked by the Council with a well-defined mission.

Due to its crosscutting nature IG1 had to liaise with the other IGs to ensure consistency in relation to identified steps to be taken and avoid duplication.

The work of IG1 was broken down into three work packages.

Work Package 1: Implementation of WG Recommendations

Milestone 1: The IG had to consider the WG Reports on “Framework Conditions” and “GPC and JPIs” and identify for the GPC the practical steps to be taken and by whom, in order to implement as much as possible their recommendations;

Milestone 2: The IG had to advise the GPC the order and timing by which the recommendations should be implemented, taking into account any necessary sequencing of implementation steps (including in relation to other IGs to ensure a coherent choreography);

⁴ ERAC-GPC 1301/15 Mandates for the GPC Implementation groups

Work Package 2: Establishing a forum for exchange of information/and coordination between JPIs and between JPIs/GPC/European stakeholders

IG1 was tasked to improve communication between the JPIs, implementing an institutionalised forum that shall help to communicate problems, possible solutions/best practices, need for support, and in general make the JPP more transparent.

Milestone 1: The IG shall ensure that such a forum will be established together with the JPIs and the EC, involving the ERA Learn 2020 project.

Milestone 2: The IG shall represent the GPC in the forum and make the necessary initiatives on behalf of the GPC plenary.

Work Package 3: Advancement of implementation of Framework Conditions

While JPIs should in principle be free with choosing the methods for implementation the WG shall focus on areas which did not get sufficient attention so far and areas where JPIs could work together in finding solutions to common problems/challenges. Work had to be done in close collaboration with the JPIs and using i.e. the ERA-Learn 2020 project to deliver support to the JPIs.

Milestone 1: The IG shall identify, together with the JPIs, which areas need increased attention and in which areas collaboration/common approaches are useful and where support can be given through the ERA-Learn 2020 Project or other means.

Milestone 2: On the basis of Milestone 1 the IG shall work on concrete steps to advance the Implementation of Framework Conditions

According to its mandate IG1 was set up for a maximum of 1 year starting in February 2015.

Composition of IG1

IG1 was composed of voluntary members of GPC working on the tasks of the group and of observers advising IG1 and establishing links to the relevant elements in the JPP.

The following individuals were involved in the work of IG1:

<i>Name</i>	<i>First name</i>	<i>Organisation, country</i>	<i>Role in IG1</i>
Bonfim	José	FCT, PT	member
Dinges	Michael	AIT, AT	observer, representative of ERA-Learn
Enache	Virginia	ANCS, RO	member
Fitzpatrick	Siobhán	Dept. of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation, IE	member
Gayraud	Emmanuel	European Commission	observer
Keet	Peter	MINEZ, NL	member
Monfray	Patrick	Agence Recherche, FR	observer, JPI representative
Mihail	Iulia	ANCS, RO	member
Šándor	Dušan	SK	member
Schmid	Martin	BMVFW, AT	member, Vice-Chair of GPC
Weiss	Brigitte	BMVIT, AT	chair, rapporteur

Background

As defined in its mandate IG1 builds up on the work of two working groups GPC had established to explore new ways of working within GPC and to find new ways for the advancement of the JPP. Both

Working Groups presented final reports. The reports by GPC Working Group “GPC and JPIs”⁵ and by GPC Working Group on Framework Conditions for Joint Programming⁶ were both adopted by the GPC on 9 September 2014 by written procedure. IG1 has been created to implement the recommendations in these reports.

GPC Working Group on GPC and JPIs (WG1)

The WG undertook a consultation using a questionnaire among the actors of the JPP: (1) JPIs (JPI Chairs), (2) GPC delegates and (3) European Commission to establish an inventory of needs, expectations and recommendations and to have a basis for evaluation what support would be needed for the JPP. The results of the questionnaire, subsequent work and discussions in the working group and in GPC led to a set of key messages, which shall now be repeated as they are still relevant.

Stronger political support at Member States level is needed

The survey emphasised that the JPP should continue to be a Member States driven initiative and pointed out the role of GPC, as the political and strategic forum for Joint Programming, to have a clear vision and determined and sustained political commitment. A common response from all key stakeholders consulted was that there is a need for such a determined and sustained political commitment to ensure that:

- the political environment within the MS is supportive of the work of the JPIs,
- it facilitates the required activities within the MS research programming policies and activities, and
- adequate resources (human and financial) are in place to support the MS actively participating in JPIs.
- Therefore the WG concluded that the 2008 commitment of the MS towards Joint Programming should be renewed and strengthened as soon as possible.

Active participation by Member States and Associated Countries is needed

The Working Group considered that active participation by all EU Member States (not only active participation at GPC level) who join JPIs is vital in order to promote cohesion, to maintain a high level of interest in Joint Programming and to maximise resources utilisation. The principles of Open Access and Variable Geometry are valuable features of Joint Programming and should be enshrined in future Joint Programming mandates.

GPC should be the key actor to help promote the implementation of JPIs

JPIs should consider the GPC as the political forum for not only their achievements and successes but also for addressing their difficulties. JPIs should work closely with the GPC to address barriers to the implementation of their SRAs and alignment of national research and innovation agendas.

The GPC should have a strategic vision on JPI goals / objectives and implementation timeframe and ensure the definition of clear national positions regarding alignment of National Research and Innovation agendas (SRAs, EU research and innovation programmes, Structural Funds ...) where possible and justified.

GPC members should, according to the results of the survey, be key actors in securing support to JPIs at a national level (financial and human resources). Equally, GPC shall support JPIs to enhance their visibility.

⁵ ERAC-GPC 1306/14, Report of the GPC Working Group on GPC and JPIs

⁶ ERAC-GPC 1304/14, Report of the GPC Working Group on Framework Conditions for Joint Programming

It was stated that for this, GPC would, as the political and strategic forum for Joint Programming, require an explicit mandate to oversee the implementation by the Member States of the Council's commitment to act rapidly and coherently to achieve the scale of impact needed to effectively address societal challenges with available research funds.

This recommendation had been followed up with the drafting of a new mandate for GPC, taking into account many of the recommendations coming from that survey.

A properly structured relationship between the actors involved in Joint Programming is needed

The consultations undertaken by the Working Group "GPC and JPIs" with the GPC, JPIs and Commission indicated that relations and communications between the three partners in the Joint Programming process are currently suboptimal to the attainment of their respective mandates. The GPC Working Group "GPC and JPIs" did not find evidence of properly structured relationships between the GPC, JPIs and Commission, nor evidence of a reliable and consistent communications structure between the parties involved in Joint Programming.

Some GPC members felt not sufficiently recognised by the JPIs, while JPIs seem to lack knowledge about the work of the GPC (some do not even know their Member State's representative). The flow of communication (on issues like CSA, Horizon 2020, Work Programmes, Innovation Plan, relations between H2020 and Innovation Plan etc.) was not considered to be optimal and there was no real timely communication between the Commission services and GPC/JPIs.

Following to these observations GPC has started inviting JPI Chairs to its meetings and since then each GPC plenary is attended by representatives from at least half of the JPIs. There are attempts within GPC to increase awareness and knowledge on the JPIs, like identifying one GPC delegate as correspondent for each JPI, being the first contact person for this specific JPI. However, this has not been achieved yet.

The role of the Commission in supporting the Joint programming process can be further improved

WG1 identified the Commission as a key player which has both the resources and ability to bring all parties together. Results from the survey suggested the Commission should streamline its internal coordination and information process and communication channels relating to JP, harmonise the official status of the EC in the different JPIs and proactively promote the JPP and the JPIs. The Working group proposed as a key mechanism to achieve this, the establishment of a Task Force on Joint Programming, composed of the responsible Commission officials.

JPIs play a key role in the completion of ERA

The contribution of the JPIs to the completion of the ERA has been noted by the Council. In its conclusions of 20 and 21 February 2014⁷ the Council considered that the development of the ERA Roadmap should take into account alignment, where possible, of national strategies and research programmes with the Strategic Research Agendas of the JPIs.

⁷ 6945/14; Rech 90, COMPET 138; Council conclusions on the progress report from the Commission on European Research Area (ERA) 2013

GPC Working Group on Framework Conditions for Joint Programming

The Working group used the Voluntary Guidelines of 2010⁸ as a starting point and further developed them to more clearly address the environment in which JPIs operate. The support in implementation was in the mandate of IG1 (for topics that are not addressed elsewhere).

The guiding principle of the report was that the term “Framework Conditions” has two aspects, both of which are already covered by the Voluntary Guidelines to varying degrees. The Working group has named these two aspects “Joint Programming Functions” and “Enabling Environment”. Whereas the former addressed the aspects of the “joint programming cycle” which have to be implemented by the JPIs, the latter addressed the conditions for this implementation which exist in the ERA. Both aspects are naturally closely interdependent.

The Joint programming Functions

The Working Group has defined six Joint Programming Functions:

Governance

The Joint Programming Function Governance involves governance systems, the involvement of stakeholders, of the scientific community and of industry as appropriate and with issues of openness and transparency. This aspect also stresses the integration of countries with less developed STI capacities or resources as being indispensable to achieve the fundamental goal of Joint Programming which is to find and implement solutions to challenges that affect all nations in the world, regardless of their STI capacities. Bearing in mind that JPIs are focussing on societal challenges the involvement of stakeholders is another important aspect. Experience shows that choosing the appropriate governance model is crucial for effective implementation.

The Strategic Process (Foresight)

Forward looking activities and stock-taking of ongoing and planned research are crucial for defining the right priorities and for elaborating an SRA. This has to be seen as a continuous process and is among the core functions of a JPI. JPIs have proven to have a strategic role in Europe with regard to their challenge area.

Alignment

Alignment has been defined as the strategic approach taken by Member States’ to modify their national programmes, priorities or activities as a consequence of the adoption of joint research priorities in the context of Joint Programming with a view to implement changes to improve efficiency of investment in research at the level of Member States and ERA.⁹ Alignment has come up as a main issue for the implementation of the SRA of a JPI. A focus on Alignment has frequently been called for, e.g. by the Expert Group Report and the Dublin Conference.

Joint Activities

The Joint Programming Initiatives have developed a number of activities in order to ensure the implementation of their Strategic Research Agendas. In addition to these Strategic Research Agendas, several JPIs have set up Implementation Plans to ensure a follow-up of the Agendas. Though varied in conception, design and follow-up, the activities developed by the different JPIs to

⁸ European Union 2011, Voluntary Guidelines on Framework Conditions for Joint Programming in Research 2010

⁹ ERAC-GPC 1305/1/14, Report of the GPC Working Group on Alignment, adopted by the GPC on 28 October 2014 by written procedure

implement their Strategic Research Agendas, including through Implementation Plans, generally fall into the following categories:

- Mapping of research capacity and capability in order to identify opportunities for Joint activities
- Identification of areas of national research for alignment at European level (co-investment with the European Commission)
- Enhanced coordination, linking and alignment of national research funding, research programmes, national infrastructure and national strategies
- Implementation of calls for proposals (funding)
- Networking, cooperation and partnership activities – with researchers, industry, policy-makers and others
- Capacity building initiatives with researchers
- Outreach and communication activities
- International collaboration with non-EU partners where justified

Dissemination and Use of Research Findings, Innovation and IPR issues

This Joint Programming Function groups together the issues of “Dissemination and Use of Research Findings”, “IPR Issues” and “Innovation”. Open access should be applied to the research output of JPIs as much as possible. This claim is even more valid since open access to publications has been made obligatory in Horizon 2020. Furthermore open access to research data needs to be dealt with by JPIs as well. Innovation as a key factor in JPIs for tackling societal challenges should address concrete and realistic issues. If appropriate, the involvement of industry should also be considered in a wide range of areas from an early stage. As another important issue closely related to innovation, JPIs shall develop IPR strategies.

Evaluation of JPIs (and of the JPP as a whole)

The Assessment of the functioning, outcome and Impact of a JPI according to their (expected) results, impacts and needs they aim to satisfy. With regard to Joint Programming, it is useful to distinguish between separate levels of evaluation: the first related to assessing the validity of the general policy concept; the second its implementation within individual Joint Programming Initiatives; the third in connection to individual projects conducted within a particular JPI.

Beyond JPIs it would be relevant to assess the dynamics and impacts of the overall process of Joint Programming considering the variety of its instruments at stake.

Enabling Environment for Joint Programming

The second aspect of the “Framework Conditions” has been identified as “Improving the environment for Joint Programming and the JPIs throughout the ERA”. The main issues are: (1) national strategic approaches and their alignment, (2) full commitment by all stakeholders (3) the problem of divergent national rules and procedures, and (4) the willingness to engage in joint and coordinated activities. Implementation

As pointed out in the mandate, IG1 was tasked with three work packages, each with two milestones.

Work Package 1: Implementation of WG Recommendations

Following an analysis of the report of the Working group “GPC and JPIs” GPC Implementation Group 1 defined a clear set of recommendations to the actors in the Joint programming process that could foster the implementation of JPIs and improve the Joint Programming Process as a whole. The

sources of these recommendations are the results of the survey among the actors of the JPP. The recommendations are directed to:

- GPC and its members
- JPIs
- the European Commission
- GPC meetings
- ERA-Learn (how to best support the Joint programming Process)

Recommendations to GPC and its members

The “recommendations to GPC and its members” drafted by IG1 were used as a basis for the document “Keeping the GPC up to the job – Tasks and Profile of GPC delegates”¹⁰. This document defined the profile and role of GPC delegates as actively contributing to the advancement of the JPP. According to this document approved by GPC delegates should...

- ... have a significant influence on their countries participation in the JPP
- ... be well informed about their countries participation in JPIs and the relating policy processes and programs
- ... be in regular contact with their countries individuals involved in JPIs and manage a national network involving their countries participants to the JPP to ensure the flow of information from the political/administrative system (GPC, government) to the JPIs in their respective countries.
- ... be well informed about national programs and R&D-activities in the fields of the JPIs

With this, GPC would be enabled to play a strong political role in the advancement of the JPP in the interplay of the actors of the process. Additionally, this would ensure a much closer interaction between GPC and the JPIs and would help ensuring stronger political commitment to the JPIs, including an increase of resources that has been asked for so many times, including by the expert group “Analysis on the Joint Programming Process”, chaired by Juan Tomas Hernari.¹¹

The abovementioned recommendations to GPC relate to shortcomings that have been identified in the survey undertaken by the Working Group “GPC and JPIs”. A more active role of GPC, overcoming these has in principle been supported by GPC. Its further implementation by the member states and associated countries is an ongoing task. This new role of the GPC is reflected in the updated mandate for GPC¹². The future relevance of GPC appears to strongly depend on the implementation of these recommendations.

Recommendations to JPIs

Provided that GPC and its delegates are ready to assume a more active role JPIs were advised to approach GPC as the forum to support their implementation and regularly report key issues, e.g. implementation problems, success stories, etc. to GPC.

Additionally JPIs were recommended to further exchange among them, including continuing to organise their annual JPI-Chairs meetings and intensify communication among JPIs in general, to develop and update appropriate SRAs and to develop roadmaps with timelines and measurable goals. JPIs were recommended to communicate more actively on the way how they focus on their

¹⁰ ERA-GPC 1305/15, “Keeping the GPC up to the job – Tasks and Profile of GPC delegates”

¹¹ Presentation at the Annual Joint programming Conference by ERA-Learn Conference, Brussels, 14th January 2015

¹² ERAC-GPC 1352/16, adopted by GPC in the meeting on the 12th of February 2016.

societal challenges and to involve EC-members and GPC delegates, e.g. by inviting them to their meetings.

Recommendations to the Commission

Since the start of the JPP the Commission has been implementing highly regarded supportive measures to the JPP, like CSAs for individual JPIs, dedicated ERA-Net and ERA-net COFUND projects for joint calls of JPIs, supporting actions like the project ERA-Learn 2020. However, currently this support is not centrally organised, but is integrated in several of the work programs of H2020. In the survey JPIs expressed the need for a more streamlined support to JPIs in the view of building the ERA and supporting the sustainability of the JPIs. JPIs also expressed their wish to be involved in the programming-cycle of H2020 and to be contacted timely to give their input (alignment shall function in two ways and take place also between national programs and H2020, not only between Member States programs).

Recommendations for GPC Meetings

The replies to the survey suggested that GPC meetings should be more focused on concrete issues brought up by JPIs and that JPI chairs should actively be involved in GPC meetings. Additionally GPC should be active to put the JPP high on the political agenda, e.g. by defining issues for Council discussions around the JPP.

This recommendation has been followed already by Inviting JPI chairs to the GPC meetings. However, the JPIs would deserve a more active role at the GPC meetings.

ERA-Learn provides a web-space for P2P initiatives, also to be used by GPC, e.g. to inform about the most important issues from GPC-meetings.

Recommendations to the project ERA-Learn 2020

The survey also indicated how ERA-learn could best support the JPIs and the JPP. All these measures are already implemented or are in the work-plan of ERA-learn 2020:

- Provide an (on-line) communication platform for JPIs and GPC (containing regularly updated key information on JPIs, on H2020 and on the GPC)
- Organize seminars on strategic and implementation issues such as implementation of Framework Conditions and exchange of best practises
- Collect evidence to inform policy, success stories to gain support and inform the public
- Support GPC and JPIs in identifying good-practise examples for JPI-implementation

Work package 2: Establishing a forum for exchange of information/and coordination between JPIs and between JPIs/GPC/European stakeholders

This task is undertaken by the EU-Project ERA-learn. On the web-portal of ERA-Learn 2020 information on issues related to the work of JPIs is compiled. ERA-Learn hosts an annual event on Joint Programming, e.g. from 14.-15. Jan 2016 the Annual Joint Programming Conference 2015 with the focus on “Building and Sustaining Commitment to Public-Public Partnerships”.

IG1 and GPC shall closely follow this work to be informed about actual developments in the JPP and to support the process within its function as the forum of high level member states representatives.

Work Package 3: Advancement of implementation of Framework Conditions

Many of the tasks falling under this work-package have been sufficiently worked on or are already dealt with by other actors. The creation of an enabling environment for Joint programming is among the tasks of GPC that have been defined under Work Package 1: it is the role of member stated policy

actors to create an environment supporting the JPP and therefore among the core activities of GPC in its future role.

A major open issue not having been sufficiently worked on is the Framework Condition “Optimum Dissemination and Use of Research Findings”, together with the Framework Condition “Protection, Management and Sharing of Intellectual Property Rights “. These issues could be further worked on by ERA-learn, supported by GPC.

Glossary

AIT	Austrian Institute for Technology
ANCS	Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research
AS	Associated Country
AT	Austria
BMVIT	Austrian Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology
BMFWF	Austrian Ministry of Science, Research and Economy
ERA	European Research Area
Expert Group	Group of experts who analysed the Joint Programming Process in 2012
FCT	Portuguese national funding agency for science, research and technology.
FP	Framework Programme, e.g. Horizon 2020
IG	Implementation Group
JP	Joint Programming
JPI	Joint Programming Initiative
JPP	Joint Programming Process
MINEZ	Ministry of Economic Affairs (Government of the Netherlands)
MS	Member State
SK	Slovakia
RO	Romania
WG	Working group