

FINAL REPORT

GPC Implementation Group 2
“Alignment and Improving
Interoperability”

Submitted on April 11, 2016

Task and background:

The GPC implementation group for alignment and improved interoperability, IG2, was given the task to "develop strategies, instruments and methods to boost alignment from both the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) and the member/associated states (MS) side with input from JPIs, MS, the European Commission (EC) and other stakeholders". The work is based on the GPC alignment working group report from 2014 and focuses on the governance from the side of the member/associated states. National alignment is a precursor to effective cooperation at the European level. Preparing the national system for European partnerships is also a key factor for less frequently represented countries to be able to join additional JPIs.

Milestones defined in the mandate and outcome

Work Package 1: Advancement of Alignment in the context of Joint Programming:

- *Milestone 1: Develop strategies, instruments and methods to boost alignment both from both the JPI and the MS side with input from JPIs, MS, the EC and other stakeholders.*

A survey was performed to provide the IG2 group with the necessary initial insight into the status of the JPI work in the MS. All mentioned stakeholders were involved in the formulation of this GPC alignment mapping survey. However, the main product of IG2 focuses on instruments and methods to boost alignment from the MS side and only indirectly from the JPI side.

- *Milestone 2: Implementing the instruments and methods to boost Alignment which have been developed together with JPIs, MS, the EC and other stakeholders.*

The second deliverable of IG2, "Governance of the national JPI process", provides guidance for national processes to make MS better prepared for international alignment and interoperability. An important step of implementation will be to have the "Governance of the national JPI process" document adopted by the GPC followed by an active process within GPC to implement these recommendations nationally. The conclusions of IG2 on national alignment have already become a part of the ongoing pan-European discussion of Horizon2020 challenges and FP9 possibilities, and will be further developed using the EC mutual learning exercise (MLE) instrument. Naturally, after one year, plenty of the task to implement still remains.

Work Package 2: Improving the interoperability of national and European programmes and activities:

- *Milestone 1: Develop options for reducing the divergence of terminology, rules and procedures to be proposed to the Council*

These issues overlap with the work of ERA-LEARN and have therefore not been further pursued. Instead, ERA-LEARN has been closely involved in the IG2 work.

- *Milestone 2: Initiate/Support/Facilitate the implementation of options selected by the Council*

There has not been a process for selection of options by the Council.

Composition of IG2

Name	Affiliation	Country	Role in IG2
Thomas Zergoi	FFG	Austria	Member
Mogens Hölder	Innovation Foundation DK	Denmark	Member
Maarja Adojaan	Research Policy Department	Estonia	Member from September 2015 to January 2016
Ülle Napa	Estonian Research Council	Estonia	Member from February 2016
Birte Wollenhaupt	Aerospace Center	Germany	Member until March 2015
Kristof Bertram	Aerospace Center	Germany	Member from April 2015
Luciano Catani	MIUR	Italy	Member and ERA-LEARN representative
Ingunn Borlaug Lid	Norges Forskningsråd	Norway	Member
Kristine Naterstad	Kunnskapsdepartementet	Norway	Member
Rui Durão	FCT	Portugal	Member
Javier Garcia	CDTI	Spain	Member
Joaquin Serrano	Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness	Spain	Member
Karin Schmekel	Ministry of Education and Research	Sweden	Chair
Mats Ulfendahl	Swedish Research Council	Sweden	Co-chair until December 2015
Pontus Holm	Swedish Research Council	Sweden	Rapporteur
Andrei Lintu	European Commission		Member from November 2015
Julia Prikoszovits	European Commission		Member until October 2015

Meetings

2015

- 1st meeting, February 3 in Brussels
- 2nd meeting, March 11 in Brussels
- 3rd meeting, April 22 in Brussels
- Informal IG2-meeting, June 3 in Brussels
- 4th meeting, June 8 in Brussels
- 5th meeting, September 29 in Brussels
- 6th meeting, November 4 in Madrid
- 7th meeting, December 3 in Lund

2016

- 8th meeting, February 11, 2016 in Brussels

Deliverable 1: Alignment mapping

The alignment mapping exercise builds on an online survey that was formulated by the IG2, in communication with GPC and the JPIs. 22 member states/associated countries completed the questionnaire. The full survey result is attached to this report as appendix #1.

The material contains insights into perceived alignment obstacles and national commitments to pursue alignment. The survey revealed a general lack of cooperation between the national players involved in JPIs, for instance between involved ministries or between representatives of different JPIs. Identified obstacles include heterogeneous call timetables and a lack of national priorities. National initiatives in support of alignment include to have European level research strategies influence national programs and to set up national coordination of involved ministries and agencies to facilitate cross-border interactions. The current discussion among JPIs of possible future legal entity forms for JPIs was visible in the survey where the lack of legal entity status was brought forward as a major obstacle for entering MoUs, contracts etc.

The mapping mentions several national JPI policies and reporting guidelines that were later collected and analysed, providing excellent examples of national working methods and potential best practices. The full analysis statement is attached as appendix #3 of this report. The primary

conclusions of what elements that emerged as important and central are summarized in the three main points below:

High level of national commitment

- High political level support
- JPIs addressed in the overall research system, i.e. making JPIs a natural part of the system rather than an anomaly
- Dedicated unit for ERA/joint programming
- Develop European component of every national program

Overarching inclusive national strategy

- Align national strategies with European strategic research agendas
 - Look for overlaps of interest to produce synergies
- Have the strategy encompass all relevant aspects, like basic research, innovation, societal challenges, alignment, ERA etc

Using the national budget as an instrument

- Budgetary flexibility
- Monetary incitement for institutions to engage in the development and implementation of international cooperation strategies, like JPIs

Deliverable 2: Governance of the national JPI process

Alignment is crucial for realizing ERA (the European Research Area) and for better utilizing available resources. However, alignment is complicated by the member states' different research systems. Europe suffers from insufficient alignment both within the national research systems and between the systems of the MS. Individual MS are encouraged to step up their JPI governance, communication channels and strategies in order to achieve better conditions for national and transnational collaboration and more efficient use of Europe's common resources. This deliverable provides a set of general recommendations at national level for accomplishing this. The full document is attached to this report as appendix #2. The main components are summarized below.

Governmental responsibility include:

- commitment to the joint programming process in the context of ERA
- national governance of the JPI process
- financial support and steering
- priority setting for JPI involvement
- result assessment
- active participation in GPC
- appoint appropriate level representatives to JPI management boards
- interact and coordinate with the European Commission and the research framework program
- the national JPI engagement should be an integrated part of the national research system

Support to the government from the national JPI representatives should include:

- sharing best practice, continuous updates
- highlight benefits for society
- involving various stakeholders
- maintaining a continuous dialogue with the research community, industry and public sector
- annual reporting from each JPI is recommended/example of best practice
- sharing ways to overcome obstacles
- identifying obstacles that cannot be solved at the individual JPI level

* The national JPI governance should facilitate coordination and communication at ministry level, at research funding agency level, and at the research performer organization level. For each JPI it may be recommended to establish 1) an inter-ministerial advisory group (as most JPIs are of cross-sectorial nature) and 2) a scientific advisory group consisting of actors from RPOs, and different stakeholder groups (industry, public sector, NGOs...). For all JPIs it may be recommended to establish a platform for sharing experiences and best practice. The national GPC representatives should initiate and coordinate such a platform.

Interactions with ERA-LEARN 2020

It has been central to IG2 to foster continuous interactions with ERA-LEARN 2020. To this end, IG2 has a permanent member from the ERA-LEARN 2020 organization. IG2 attended and participated actively (rapporteur function etc) in the ERA-LEARN 2020 events “Workshop on the Practical Implementation of Alignment: Learning from Good Practice” on September 29, 2015 and the Annual Joint Programming Conference of January 14-15, 2016.

Other interactions

IG2 has been represented at various other related meetings, including the JPI chairs meeting of March 10, 2015, the JPI Stakeholder Workshop of June 2, 2015, the Lund Revisited conference of December 3-4, 2015, the ERA-Learn Annual Joint Programming workshop of January 14-15, 2016, and the Science Europe workshop “The Interplay of European and National Research Funding” of March 17, 2016.

Next steps

The one-year effort of IG2 significantly raised the awareness, knowledge and visionary thinking of the participants. More concretely, it produced a useful alignment mapping dataset and guidelines for a developed national governance process that, if and when implemented, the group feels could be a game changer for European joint programming. This view is very much echoed in the recently published “Evaluation of Joint Programming to Address Grand Societal Challenges” report from the EC that highlights the need for national alignment. Even so, this work is clearly just the beginning. Natural next steps would be to a) implement the suggested national governance process, and b) to target inter-country alignment and interoperability needs. This will to some extent be addressed by the budding mutual learning exercise on alignment that the EC policy support facility is engaging a group of GPC member countries in (including a high overlap with the IG2 member countries).

Further discussions and development of instruments for addressing additional alignment challenges may target institutional alignment, design of national programs in the spirit of European alignment,

full common pot and generous virtual common pot calls, legal entity alternatives for JPIs, and European level core resources etc.