



## **Session 1: Impacts at policy and network level**

**Austrian Ministry for Transport, Innovation and  
Technology**

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## **Rationale & main objectives of the initiative: Definition of a common position on alignment in Austria**

- **The Austrian Federal Ministries for Transport, Innovation and Technology, and of Science, Research and Economy carried out an exercise on Alignment to:**
  - define a common position on alignment agreed upon by the major R&D Stakeholders in Austria
  - to establish the degree of implementation of alignment activities
  - to find out about the willingness of R&D policy actors and stakeholders to further engage in alignment
  - to learn more about obstacles preventing alignment
  - to learn more about the role of alignment in R&D policies
- We used a **broader definition of alignment**, including the P2P networks, but also other ways of transnational public funding of R&D



## Results: Definition of a common position on alignment in Austria

- **The exercise to define a common Austrian position on Alignment showed that:**
  - Alignment is a reality since many years; Austria is one of the more engaged countries in Europe with activities in many domains
  - there is a rather positive perception of alignment by many and a willingness to continue to engage in it
  - Alignment is perceived as useful to meet R&D-policy targets
  - Alignment is perceived as important to increase the quality and effectiveness of R&D and to implement ERA
  - Alignment on program and policy level is well-developed and visible; not so much is institutional alignment -> here incentives are needed
  - The share of 'aligned' research budget is still relatively low



## Results (2): Definition of a common position on alignment in Austria

- **Alignment is not a self-sufficient objective** but needs to be well-embedded in longer-term research R&D strategies and actions in their domain
- An **exchange of experience** among initiatives and criteria to facilitate the decision about the participation in new activities might be helpful
- Alignment is **much more than joint calls** and the pooling of financial resources, it comprises:
  - *Foresight, common visions, joint mapping*
  - *Joint strategic planning, joint research priorities and agendas*
  - *Coordinated priority setting (institutional), synchronized calls*
  - *Joint use of infrastructure*
  - *Joint development of standards*
  - *Joint monitoring and evaluation*
  - *Mobility, training of researchers, staff exchange*
  - *Joint implementation*
  - *Networks of researchers, institutions...*
  - *Etc.*



## Results (3): Definition of a common position on alignment in Austria

- **There are a number of enabling factors as prerequisites for alignment**
  - National priorities or programs (to have a basis for alignment)
  - ideally there are already funded programs to have resources for joint activities
  - Long-term strategies where alignments activities can be embedded
  - A clear political will to invest in alignment activities
  - The ability to take (longer-term) funding decisions
  - Sufficient resources and the willingness to cover additional costs for alignment (personal and financial)
  - Empirical evidence and evaluation to confirm the usefulness of activities and to be able to adjust, where needed
  - Clear responsibilities in taking the lead in activities



## Key impacts of the initiative: Definition of a common position on alignment in Austria

- **The impact of the initiative is on a policy level** as this was a research policy initiative
  - It increased political awareness and put alignment higher on the agenda of R&D policies
  - It made visible that there is much alignment already; it raised the awareness on existing activities and showed that those activities are vital parts of existing R&D-programs
  - As a follow-up a new working group on Alignment in the frame of the Austrian R&D-Strategy has been established
    - This shows that Alignment will be high on the R&D-policy agenda
  - This WG will build up on the findings of the predecessor-process and will work towards further alignment where useful
  - The implementation will, among others, be assessed through the monitoring of the implementation of ERA in member states



## Validity of the ERA-LEARN 2020 assessment framework, notably on policy and network level

- Does the framework capture effectively the various impacts you have experienced?
  - The framework is extensive, there might just be one additional as an open question, named “further impact”
- Does the framework appropriately addresses/considers network elements that are important, i.e. network organisations, governance structures, network processes, etc.?
  - The framework is extensive already
  - I would suggest to include more information on the consortium (its position relative to the research field, what relevant actors are not participating, are all relevant competencies in the consortium...

## Suggestions for improvement

- The framework can be a valuable tool. To increase its impact it could be complemented by an easy-to-read 'manual' for carrying out impact assessments
  - Proposing a step-by step procedure for an evaluation/impact assessment, using the framework as a background document
  - Making evaluation exercises comparable
- A database compiling the results of evaluation exercises following the scheme could be set up
  - To build up a standardized overview on evaluations of alignment activities across Europe
  - to facilitate learning processes within the P2P-familiy
  - To further improve the framework if needed