

MANDATE

FOR THE TRANSITIONAL FORUM FOR R&I PARTNERSHIPS (2019-2020)

1. Objectives and deliverables of the Forum for R&I partnerships

The Transitional Forum for R&I Partnerships is created as part of the strategic coordinating process for partnerships¹ for the interim period from Mid-2019 to December 2020 in order to prepare for the launch of a Forum for R&I Partnerships under Horizon Europe in 2021 and help prepare Member States and Associated Countries to participate in the strategic coordinating process. This approach, endorsed by ERAC at its Plenary meeting of 6 December 2018, will allow taking into account the revised European Research Area (ERA) priorities, positioning the envisaged Forum in the future governance of ERA and the Framework Programme, and agreeing in that evolving context on its main elements, appropriate form, resource allocation, and composition.

The strategic coordinating process for partnerships is set up following a recommendation of the Council² and European Research and Innovation Area Committee (ERAC)³ and is in line with Article 4a of the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe (Partial General Approach). Its objectives are to:

- Ensure transparent and evidence-based selection of partnerships rationalising the landscape and maximising their impacts;
- Support the effective and efficient implementation of partnerships throughout their lifecycle;
- Provide strategic guidance on the overall policy approach and the future objectives and composition of the partnership portfolio.

It was endorsed at the level of ERAC that the strategic coordinating process consists of two parts.

1. The selection of partnerships will be fully integrated into the Strategic Planning of Horizon Europe, with the Strategic configuration of the Programme Committee as the single entry point for the structured consultation of Member States / Associated Countries. This will ensure focus on commonly agreed objectives and expected impacts, and the overall coherence between the different activities of the Framework Programme, while respecting the existing decision-making processes⁴.
2. The implementation, monitoring, evaluation and phasing-out of partnerships will be followed by a dedicated advisory mechanism – “Forum for European R&I Partnerships”. Such Forum will provide strategic input to the Commission and Member States/Associated Countries on the possible implementation, monitoring and phasing out of R&I partnerships in Europe. The envisaged Forum will support a strategy-led and coherent approach to R&I partnerships in Europe, in particular with regard to links and synergies with relevant national activities. The Forum's advice will enable the full exploitation of the potential of R&I partnerships for the EU, the Participating States and citizens in an open and effective manner. The Forum will give national authorities access to information concerning partnerships through a single entry point, enhance coordination with MS/AC programmes to ensure that

¹European Partnerships funded under Horizon Europe, and other relevant transnational R&I initiatives, such as Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs) funded by MS/AC.

² 15320/17. The Council called in its conclusions of 1 December 2017 on “the Commission and the Member States to jointly establish a long-term strategic coordinating process for R&I partnerships, including a governance structure, linked to the strategic programming process”.

³ ERAC 1204/18. Final report of the ERAC Ad-hoc Working Group on Partnerships on “Process”.

⁴ Notably right of initiative of the Commission and comitology provisions.

resources and efforts go in a commonly agreed direction, as well as potentially act as an incubator for topics of common interest.

2. Tasks and responsibilities of the Transitional Forum

Taking forward the ERAC recommendations and the proposal made by the Commission at the ERAC plenary on 6 December 2018, the Transitional Forum will in particular address the following aspects:

A. Scope and structure of biennial monitoring

A biennial monitoring of European Partnerships and other R&I partnerships of European relevance will be a central product of the Transitional Forum. This will provide the evidence base to guide the effective and efficient implementation of partnerships throughout their lifecycle, and inform strategic discussions on the partnership policies. The Transitional Forum will propose the scope and structure for the biannual monitoring reports with a view to ensuring a systematic overview of the overall partnership landscape. Furthermore, it will assess the related data needs, requirements and processes for gathering and harmonising data across countries.

B. Scope of foresight activities for the partnership portfolio development

Foresight will help the Forum for R&I Partnerships to identify gaps and emerging opportunities in the landscape of R&I partnerships of European relevance, including new policy directions at national and EU level in view of informing the direction of EU and MS/AC support. The Transitional Forum will provide strategic input and advise on the scope, approach and necessary resources for foresight activities, including how to link this up with the strategic foresight exercises at international (e.g. OECD), EU and national levels.

C. Follow-up of ERAC recommendations to Member States / Associated Countries

The Transitional Forum will support (and monitor) the implementation of ERAC recommendations addressed to Member States and Associated Countries. It will in particular issue common guidance on enabling conditions and support mutual learning between countries. This will help to establish the national governance and monitoring systems in time for the launch of partnerships at the start of Horizon Europe so that their future participation is accompanied by appropriate commitment and resources across the life cycle of initiatives, as well as capabilities to assess impacts at national level.

D. Guidance for possible group(s) of external experts

The Transitional Forum will provide input and feedback to the work of possible group(s) of experts set up by the Commission that may be required to support the implementation of the strategic coordinating process for partnerships, notably for the evidence base and the portfolio development⁵.

E. Advice on the Forum during Horizon Europe

The Transitional Forum will advise the Commission and Member States on the development of a proposal for the tasks, form, status, representation of participating states, involvement of partnerships, and resource allocation for the Forum that will accompany the implementation of Horizon Europe. This input will take into account the Forum's positioning in the light of revised ERA priorities and future governance, the strategic planning process for Horizon Europe, as well as the first experiences of the functioning of the Transitional Forum. It will also address communication and branding issues related to the strategic coordinating process and partnerships in general.

⁵ The portfolio development allows assessing gaps and emerging opportunities in the partnership landscape, as well as political priorities at country and EU level. It can also advise on highly populated areas with high pressure for phasing out existing partnerships as a pre-condition for being able to create new ones.

In addition, the Commission can informally consult the Transitional Forum on other aspects where it considers the input from Member States relevant (e.g. feedback on the revised criteria framework for partnerships).

3. Deliverables

The Transitional Forum will submit the following deliverables to the Commission, Member States and Associated Countries:

1. Recommendation for the scope and structure of the biennial monitoring and the necessary processes and data request;
2. Recommendation for the scope, approach and necessary resources of foresight activities;
3. Common guidelines (enabling conditions) for the design and implementation of national governance structures, national monitoring mechanisms, etc.;
4. Report on the status of preparation of Member States / Associated Countries;
5. Opinion on the proposal for the Forum and its scope, implementation and governance during Horizon Europe;
6. Final report of the Transitional Forum to the attention of ERAC.

4. Duration and organisation of the work

The Transitional Forum is set up for the period from around mid-2019 until December 2020. It operates in an open method of coordination based on consensus, and with participation on equal footing of the Member States and the Commission.

Formal meetings are held on a regular basis, typically up to four times a year. The meetings will normally be held in Brussels. Only one representative per Member States delegation is expected to participate in the meetings.

The Transitional Forum may seek independent expert advice by involving external experts in its work, and also invite them to its meetings if appropriate. It may organise workshops on an ad-hoc basis to engage key stakeholders and to seek input to or feedback on its work.

5. Membership and profile

Each Member State⁶ may designate maximum two representatives to the Transitional Forum to allow for a back-up/rotating participation in meetings. They should be senior policy officials representing the Government / Ministries responsible for research and innovation policy in the Member States. The nominated members need to have access to and be capable of influencing policy-making on all R&I partnerships in their country. They should be responsible for the overall national coordination related to R&I partnerships, and be mandated to represent national positions on all types of partnerships, including those with industry.

The Chairperson of the High-Level Group of Joint Programming (GPC) will be invited to meetings as an observer.

6. Co-chairmanship

The Transitional Forum will be co-chaired, in the same spirit as in ERA, by the Commission and an elected representative from among the Member States' representatives. The Commission co-chair will

⁶ The possibility for countries associated to Horizon 2020 and/or EEA EFTA countries to participate in the Transitional Forum is currently being assessed by the Commission Services.

hold a management position in DG RTD. Correspondingly, the Co-chair from the Member States will hold a management position and must be chosen from among the delegates of the Transitional Forum. Once elected, the Member State co-chair will represent the general interests of the Forum and is no longer a member of a national delegation⁷.

The co-chair is elected for the whole duration of the transitional period of the Transitional Forum (i.e. until December 2020). The co-chairs shall organise the work of the Transitional Forum along its main tasks and responsibilities outlined in this mandate, and according to jointly agreed work plan.

7. Support group

A support group will assist the Member States and the Commission co-chairs in the planning, preparation and follow-up of the activities of the Transitional Forum composed of themselves or their representatives, and three to five Forum Delegates. The members of the support group are proposed by the co-chairs, and approved by consensus by the Transitional Forum. They are designated for the whole duration of the transitional period.

8. Secretariat and resources

The Commission will provide the support for the transitional period in the form of the Secretariat, organisation of meetings, reimbursement of travel expenses, and possible expert groups. The Secretariat will in particular support the co-chairs in preparing and circulating draft agendas, meeting summaries, and related documents.

Member States will provide resources for their participation and national preparation and cover the related costs. Other resources eventually considered necessary will have to be found on a case-by-case basis.

⁷ Meaning the country can nominate another delegate
