



# ERA-LEARN: 2009 TO 2014

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Back in 2008, the European Commission (DG RTD) established the “ERA-NET Learning Platform” in order to support participants in ERA-NETs and provide them with a platform for mutual learning. Supporting this ERA-NET Learning Platform, ERA-LEARN was launched in 2009 and designed from the beginning as an interactive process involving the whole ERA-NET community. Information sharing and good practice exchange mechanisms have been one of the main pillars of ERA-LEARN.

Considering the large potential and strong need for the frequent participants to optimise their use of the ERA-NET instrument, and for the less or even first time involved participants to avoid a long learning phase by exploiting the expertise across Europe ERA-LEARN catalysed this learning process and helped to reduce wasteful use of resources.

highlighting the synergies between ERA-NETs and other forms of national and regional research programme coordination and facilitating high-level analysis of policy related issues in the context of programme coordination and cooperation.

ERA-LEARN has supported the implementation of streamlined mechanisms and increased mutual learning within the wider ERA-NET community. Input has been provided towards the analysis and possible future development of the ERA-NET scheme,

A set of well established guidelines and tools have been developed, successfully supporting the members of ERA-NET projects when implementing joint calls or reviewing their participations.



These guidelines and tools have been available through the ERA-LEARN toolbox [www.era-learn.eu](http://www.era-learn.eu) as a separate part of the NETWATCH portal and comprised the following main distinct elements:

- Smart Coordination: ERA instruments: Analysis of trends in the coordination of national and/or regional research programmes with a view to the reasoning behind the choice of the respective instrument: ERA-NET, Art. 185, JTI, JPI, ETP, EUREKA and other relevant instruments, including:
  - Thematic clustering of ERA initiatives
  - Positioning of the ERA-NET scheme in the context of other instruments
  - Criteria and indicators
- Tools for internal review of ERA-NET participation: supporting a strategic approach to ERA-NET participation in your organisation
  - Annual Joint Programming Event, Brussels, 11/ 2011
  - EC / ERA-LEARN Workshop “The future ERA-NET instrument under H2020”, Brussels, 06/2012
  - ERA-LEARN Workshop “Addressing the needs of the mature trans-national coordination community”, Dublin, 02/2013
  - ERA-LEARN workshop “Implementing Joint Calls”, 03/2011, 11/2011, 09/2013, 01/2014, 09/2014
- Cost-benefit analysis of calls: Benchmarking tool for assessing the efficiency of joint calls
- Manual and tools for call implementation: a comprehensive set of information needed to launch and implement a joint call
- IPR information: Suggestions for applicants to joint calls
- Mapping tools for participating programmes

ERA-LEARN also published Newsletters, reports and other publications of relevance for the ERA-NET community.

Several conferences, workshops and other events at European level have been (co-)organised to involve and commit the entire ERA-NET community, including

- Annual ERA-NET event “ERA-NETs on stage”, Brussels, 2008, 2009, 2010
- EC / ERA-LEARN Strategy Workshop “Innovation Union - Joint Programming and its instruments”, Brussels, 4/ 2011

Full event documentation is available on the ERA-LEARN events section.

In a later phase ERA-LEARN assessed user needs and expectations related to a web-based platform through a qualitative stakeholder consultation. The results showed that the provision of coherent advice such as good practice guidelines and information support services become increasingly important. These findings were exploited to outline specifications of a future platform, to be implemented from 2015.

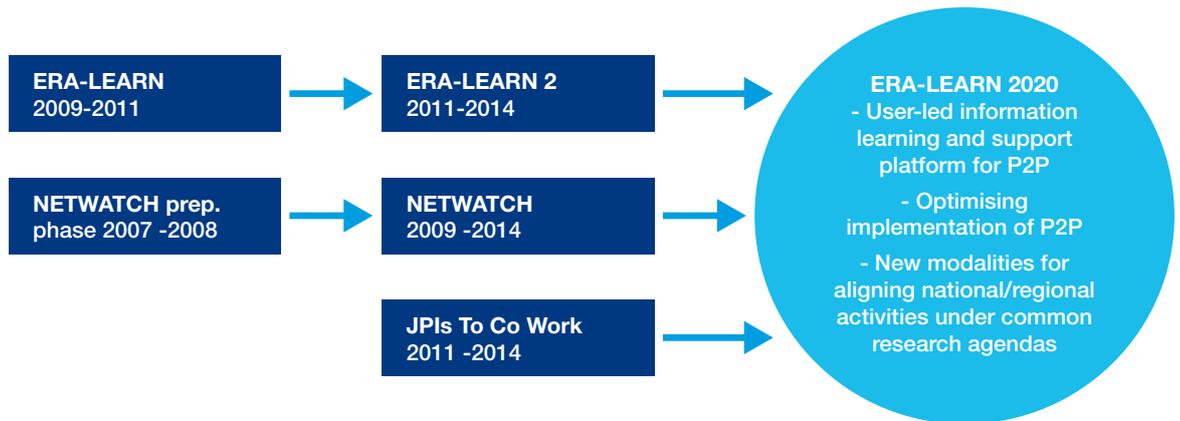
## NEW TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE ON [WWW.ERA-LEARN.EU](http://WWW.ERA-LEARN.EU)

In 2014 the ERA-LEARN toolbox has been substantially expanded with a new section dedicated especially to **Public-Public-Partnerships (P2P) under Horizon 2020**. This section provides the P2P community with practical information on implementing the new ERA-NET Cofund initiatives. The P2P section is divided into three parts:

- “H2020 calls for P2Ps” shows a complete list of current (Work Programme 2014/2015) HORIZON 2020 topics for ERA-NET Cofund as well as Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) supporting Public-Public-Partnerships.
- “ERA-NET Cofund under H2020: background information” provides details on the implementation of the ERA-NET Cofund instrument including a description of eligible activities.
- “Practical documentation” contains a number of H2020 documents together with some practical guidance to support the implementation of ERA-NET Cofund initiatives, including a table comparing FP7 ERA-NET (Plus) with H2020 ERA-NET Cofund, a summary presentation on “ERA-NET Cofund in Horizon 2020”, Guidelines for Independent Observers as well as some practical details on EU Cofund financial principles and template for Consortium Agreements specifically for ERA-NET Cofund.



Expected to start in January 2015, the ERA-LEARN 2020 project will strengthen joint programming in Europe. Building on the ERA-LEARN, NETWATCH and JPIsToCoWork predecessor projects it will provide an integrated framework to make Public-Public-Partnerships (P2P) more efficient and effective and support national and regional funding organisations in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of joint actions.



ERA-LEARN 2020 will support the implementation of streamlined mechanisms and increased mutual learning within the P2P community. Useful input will be provided towards the analysis and possible future development of P2P formats. ERA-LEARN 2020 will highlight synergies between different forms of national/regional programme coordination and facilitate high-level analysis of policy-related issues. It will provide tools for analysis and communication formats for supporting future developments of transnational programme coordination.

The project will be implemented by a team of national agencies and experts with many years' experience with P2P at both the operational and policy levels. Consortium members complement each other through their diverse involvement in P2P, through their specific roles and through their complementary expertise, including public

funding authorities and experts for analysis, impact assessment and monitoring. They have been active in more than 145 P2P initiatives (83% of all P2P since FP6), including all types.

The specific challenge to be addressed by ERA-LEARN 2020 is to merge and expand the activities of the predecessor networks ERA-LEARN, NETWATCH and JPIsToCoWork. This will include the realisation of a common approach to the planning and implementation of joint activities and aligned national and/or regional activities, their monitoring and impact assessment as well as dissemination of results. This will involve the main stakeholders engaged in designing and deploying the broad structures and functions for the coordination and cooperation of national and/or regional research programmes.

The core objectives of ERA-

LEARN 2020 are to provide a web-based information, learning and support platform for P2P to avoid duplication of efforts; to support the ongoing optimisation of P2P networks by providing a toolbox to include the wider activities of joint programming, particularly the JPIs, Art.185 and the ERA-NET Cofund instrument, as well as their associated impacts; to implement a systematic process for monitoring & impact assessment of P2P networks, including their impacts at both the policy, programme and co-funded RTD project-level; to assess and benchmark current approaches to alignment and explore options for new modalities that will better align national and/or regional activities under common research agendas; and to implement an annual cycle of knowledge exchange aimed at increasing the impact of investment in P2P activities and exploring options to support less research intensive countries.



The Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2014/15 included for the year 2014 call topics for ERA-NET actions that led to submissions of 11 proposals. They have been submitted to the calls launched under the different priorities and challenges and evaluated as part of the overall evaluation. Dedicated experts with specific expertise on programme implementation and evaluation in relation to ERA-NETs have been selected, together with thematic experts, to evaluate the proposals. The proposals demonstrate that overall the new approach for ERA-NETs under Horizon 2020 has been well understood by the applicants and most proposals fully comply with the ERA-NET Cofund requirements. Many very good descriptions of work received high scores from the expert evaluators. Most of the proposals foresee additional calls (up to 4) and include a wide range of additional activities, with no general difference between ERA-NETs with or without JPI background. Many proposals include strong international collaboration.

### Positive impact of ERA-NET Cofund on country participation and critical mass

The proposal data for the ERA-NET Cofund actions submitted to the calls in 2014 allows a comparison between the calls implemented under FP7 and the cofunded calls planned by the ERA-NETs under Horizon

2020. The main findings are summarised in the following table. The cofunded calls that will be implemented by the ERA-NETs submitted in 2014 will on average result in a much broader participation of countries and substantially larger call budgets. The budget contributions are more balanced, and the participation of EU13 countries

has increased, although the increase is stronger for the share of participation than for the budget contributions. The stronger country participation results in three countries participating in every ERA-NET call, and a further nine that participate at least in 60% of the calls.

	ERA-NET scheme FP7	ERA-NET Cofund Horizon 2020
Number of countries per call	10	18
Average call Budget [Euro million]	8,8	27,9
Share of EU13*		
- budget	5%	6%
- participation	13%	21%
Countries participating in calls		
100%	-	3 (BE, ES, NL)
>80%	-	5 (+ PT, NO)
>60%	3 (BE, FR, DE)	12 (+ AT, FR, DE, IT, PL, RO, UK)



Table: Comparison of key data for calls launched by the ERA-NETs under FP7 and the ERA-NET Cofund calls under Horizon 2020 (cofunded calls planned for 2015).

\* "EU13 Member States" are countries which joined the European Union in 2004, 2007 and 2013: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

Call identifier	Acronym	Title	Number of participants
HCO-10-2014	E-Rare-3	ERA-NET rare disease research implementing IRDiRC objectives	26
HCO-07-2014	JPco-fuND	ERA-NET for establishing synergies between the Joint Programming on Neurodegenerative Diseases Research and Horizon 2020	25
HCO-08-2014	TRANSCAN-2	ERA-NET: Aligning national/regional translational cancer research programmes and activities	28
HCO-09-2014	ERAcSysMed	ERAcSysMed - Collaboration on systems medicine funding to promote the implementation of systems biology approaches in clinical research and medical practice	15
SC5-09-2014	BiodivERsA3	Consolidating the European Research Area on biodiversity and ecosystem services	32
WATER-3-2014	WaterWorks	Water Works 2014-2019 in Support of the Water JPI	23
LCE-18-2014	ENSCC	ERA-NET Smart Cities and Communities	18
LCE-18-2014	DemoWind	DemoWind ERA-NET Cofund action - delivering cost reduction in offshore wind	6
LCE-18-2014	ERA-NET SmartGridPlus	ERA-Net Smart Grids Plus: support deep knowledge sharing between regional and European Smart Grids initiatives	24
REFLECTIVE-1-2014	HERA JRP UP	HERA Joint Research Programme Uses of the Past	25
ISIB-12a-2014	FACCE SURPLUS	FACCE SURPLUS	22

A crucial element of the Joint Programming Process is the alignment of national and European strategies and research programmes with Strategic Research Agendas (SRAs) of Joint Programming Initiatives (JPI). Therefore, the High Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC) set up a working group on alignment. A first workshop with relevant stakeholders to gather the different ideas and experiences took place in March 2014. The Working Groups presented its final report at the GPC plenary meeting in September.

The Working Group was tasked with drafting a report to the GPC with the objective of exploring the concept of alignment in order to develop a common understanding of the ways alignment is undertaken in the context of Joint Programming; producing practical recommendations to implement actions that lead to alignment and making proposals for establishing measurable targets to help monitor the progress of alignment. A first important step was to identify a common definition of Alignment for Joint Programming which is the following: "The state of alignment for a particular JPI is changing and developing over time. Alignment is 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." Moreover, the Working Group gives recommendations to the Member States, the JPIs and to the GPC itself, e.g.:

- Stronger interministerial coordination is needed, involving commitment and funding from several ministries (and their related funding agencies).

- New ways of engaging institutions should be addressed by policy makers, by developing a coordinated approach for institutional and project-based funding.

- JPIs should look into aligning all actions spanning the programming cycle: from joint foresight, development of SRAs to joint processes of research practices, funding, implementation and ex-post evaluation and mobilization of in-kind resources.

- JPIs should use different actions and tools based on their type of challenge, on the kind of existing national programmes and on the available economic, human and technical resources and based on the phase of development they are in at a given point in time.

- Different actions that enable alignment within participating Member and Associated States are brought together in a JPI. Good practices should be further developed and eventually become best practices, shared among JPIs and promoted throughout Member States.

- Monitoring of alignment activities should be undertaken by both JPIs and Member States by developing a strategy for monitoring their alignment activities.

- The role of the GPC would not be to monitor alignment accomplished in different JPIs or different Member States, but to develop a common approach for monitoring alignment. This can be done either by a dedicated GPC working group on this issue.

Besides the Working Group on Alignment the GPC set up three other Working Groups, namely:

- GPC and JPIs
- Framework Conditions for Joint Programming
- Measuring JPIs Progress and Impact

The state of alignment for a particular JPI is changing and developing over time. Alignment is the strategic approach taken by Member States' to modify their national programmes, priorities or activities...





The ERA-NET scheme was launched in 2002 under the 6th Framework Programme (FP6) to support the coordination and collaboration of national research programmes. It aimed at facilitating the exchange of good practices, the strategic planning and the design of joint research programmes as well as the implementation of joint activities, in particular joint calls.

Under the 7th Framework Programme (FP7), the ERA-NET scheme was reinforced by introducing an additional new module, ERA-NET Plus, which allows the topping-up of joint trans-national funding for calls with European Union funding.

ERA-NETs under Horizon 2020 follow the principle of simplification and build on the reliable collaboration with MS and their research funders established over the past ten years. They merge the former ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus and have the central and compulsory element of implementing one substantial call with top-up funding from the European Union. The focus is shifting from the funding of networks to the top-up funding of individual joint calls in selected sub-challenges with high European added value and relevance for Horizon 2020 (policy-driven approach).

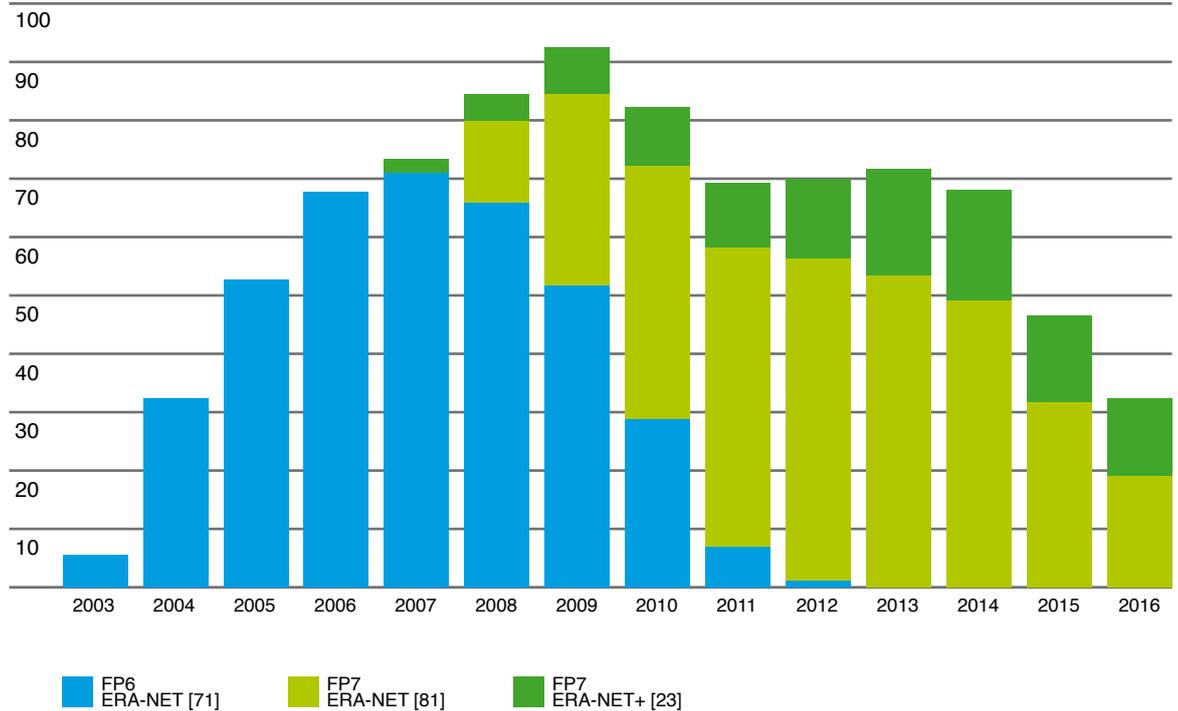
The Commission services have prepared a report on the ERA-NET scheme from FP6 to Horizon 2020, some important findings are summarised below, the full report is available under: <http://netwatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/lp/learning-platform/publications/>

**- From 2002 – 2013 the EU invested Euro 483 million in the ERA-NET scheme**

The ERA-NET scheme was strongly used by Member States and their research funders, resulting in 123 different ERA-NETs under FP6 and FP7 receiving funding for coordinating national research programmes.

23 ERA-NET Plus actions (top-up funding of transnational calls) have been supported under FP7. The total funding the 71 ERA-NETs under FP7 have received is Euro 180 million. The ERA-NET scheme under FP7 has been funded with Euro 302 million, of which Euro 144 million account for the ERA-NET Plus actions.





- **All EU Member States are highly involved in the ERA-NET scheme**

A total of 72 countries, EU Member States, Associated Countries and Third Countries have participated in ERA-NETs with a strong increase from 47 countries under FP6 to 68 countries under FP7. France, Germany and Spain are the leading participants, but there is also significant involvement of a group of smaller countries, e.g. Austria, Belgium, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands. The participation of EU13 has increased but is still comparatively low overall with 13% of all participations. The most active associate countries are Israel, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

- **More than 350 calls, resulting in more than 3.400 transnational projects funded since 2004**

A total of 359 joint calls have been or are being implemented from 2004 to 2014 and more than 35 calls

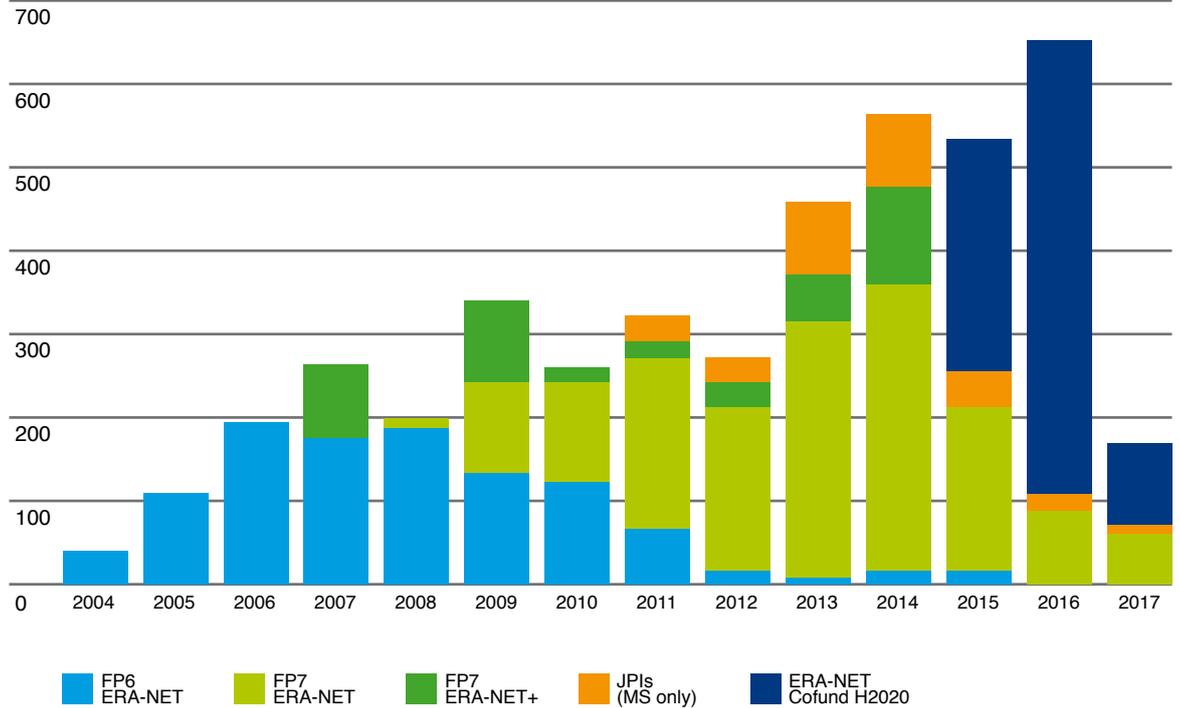
are still planned for 2015 to 2017. More than 3.400 projects are being funded in the period from 2004 to 2014.

- **Annual volume of coordinated research close to Euro 400 million**

The public funding of transnational research by ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus actions has been growing steadily since the first calls in 2004 and totals Euro 370 million for 2013 and planned Euro 475 million for 2014. Including the data on calls launched by JPIs and the calls resulting from the ERA-NET Cofund action of the Work Programme 2014/15, the total public funding for transnational calls will exceed Euro 600 million in 2016. The total public funding of research implemented by ERA-NETs and ERA-NET Plus from its beginning until 2013 amounts to more than Euro 2,3 billion and will reach more than Euro 3 billion by 2016.

Graph 1: Number of running ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus actions over the period 2004-2017.





Graph 2.2: Total public funding per year for calls implemented by ERA-NET , ERA-NET Plus, JPIs (calls implemented by MS only) and ERA-NET Cofund under Horizon 2020 actions over the period 2004-2017 including currently planned calls [Euro million].

- **Substantial leverage effects on research coordination**  
The Union funding of ERA-NETs creates substantial effects on research coordination. The leverage effect of the Framework Programme funding was close to 6 for FP6 ERA-NETs (FP funding resulting in public funding of transnational projects) and more than 10 for FP7 ERA-NETs, with some individual ERA-NETs reaching leverage effects of 50.
- **ERA-NET Plus supporting critical mass, evaluation standards and financial integration**  
The ERA-NET Plus instrument results in substantially more countries participating and in larger average call budgets of €19 million compared to €7 million for the ERA-NET calls and supports achieving critical mass. In addition, it establishes international peer review as an evaluation standard, as well as successfully increasing financial integration to ensure proposal selection exclusively based on excellence.
- **Continuity of networks creates stronger leverage**  
There is a very significant difference between FP7 ERA-NETs that continued from FP6 and achieve leverage effect of more than 16, and new ERA-NETs under FP7 with a leverage effect of 7. This confirms the message from many networks that continuity is a key successor factor.





The ERA-LEARN project facilitates learning among national and regional funding organisations in order to optimise their transnational activities, including ERA-NET performance. The ERA-LEARN Toolbox is available at <http://www.era-learn.eu>

Find previous editions of our newsletter here: <http://www.era-learn.eu>

To register for the newsletter see: <http://netwatch.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

