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“Re-Imagining partnerships: the road to FP10”

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“The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the individuals who contributed to the discussions during the forum and do not necessarily reflect the views, policies, or positions of the European Commission.”

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1. Executive summary

The fourth Partnership Stakeholder Forum was organised by the European Commission and ERA-LEARN and took place in Brussels, 3 December 2025. The event, which was moderated by Charlotte Van Velthoven-Geerdink, attracted around 400 participants in person and online. Marc Lemaitre, Director-General of DG RTD, welcomed the participants and made the first key-note speech, while the second key-note speech was given by Pauline Rouch, Director from DG RTD, DIR G, who presented the Commission's proposal for partnerships in the next Horizon Europe (FP10). The format of the forum included panel discussions and parallel workshops, engaging participants in highly interactive set ups.

Setting the scene for European Partnerships under FP10

During the key-note speeches and the plenary sessions, the EC proposal for partnerships in the next Framework Programme was discussed, amongst the legacy created thus far and the current challenges facing partnerships. The FP10 proposal positions European Partnerships as a core pillar of the European Research Area that must now be reshaped to deliver greater impact with less complexity, moving from automatic continuation to a disciplined, streamlined portfolio with clear added value, critical mass, transparency, and stronger tripartite collaboration. Current deficiencies such as fragmented governance, uneven participation, and administrative burden, need to be effectively addressed, while today's socio-economic challenges call for partnerships that convert excellent science into strategic technologies faster and at scale. The proposal for a coherent portfolio of partnerships supported by evidence-based selection, harmonised contributions, monitoring and continuous assessment, along with clearer life cycle approaches, and links to deployment via diverse funding sources is welcomed in principle. The new Commission proposal is broadly accepted in principle, although with caution until more details become available. Clear safeguards need to be put in place and long advance notice is important so that national systems are effectively consulted. Industry welcomes structured collaboration and leverage but warns that in kind contributions must be valued and incentives kept practical, while regions ask for genuine involvement that mobilises territorial ecosystems and smart specialisation rather than symbolic participation. A recurring challenge is synchronising national and EU budgeting rhythms, with proposed solutions focused on early involvement and long-term planning. Overall, the most crucial success factor highlighted is predictable rules and early systematic engagement that preserve trust while enabling a leaner, more impact-oriented partnership portfolio.

Assessing and demonstrating the impact of European Partnerships

The parallel workshop on impact revealed the variety in the ways impact is understood across partnerships and the different approaches that are applied in impact monitoring and assessment. The discussion highlighted difficulties in capturing long term impacts that may take a decade to quantify and noted that monitoring, while necessary, can become a heavy administrative burden. Participants also pointed to Europe's risk aversion and a "speed gap" versus global competitors,

alongside the need to bridge different stakeholder objectives and address gaps in regulation and standards. Despite the challenges, there is a wealth of experience and different approaches of impact monitoring and demonstration that is worth sharing in the partnership community. The concluding recipe for impact stressed faster operations, stronger cooperation and openness to unlock innovation ecosystems, readiness building so results are actually adopted, active engagement in regulation and standards, and agile bottom-up strategy adaptation to prevent fragmentation and sustain momentum across programmes.

Raising the potential for synergies and cooperation within clusters, across partnerships and beyond

The parallel session on raising synergies highlighted both the necessity and the difficulty of collaboration within and beyond partnerships, drawing on practical experiences and in-depth discussions. Participants identified systemic challenges such as fragmented governance, misaligned instruments, administrative burden, limited resources, lack of guidance, analytical tools and shared spaces, which hinder effective cross-partnership and external collaboration. Difficulties were particularly acute in identifying common collaboration topics, aligning timelines and engaging actors beyond the partnership landscape. In response, the discussions converged on a coherent set of solutions centred on stronger and more neutral governance mechanisms, simplified and harmonised procedures, flexible and incentivising funding instruments, and improved administrative capacity back by adequate dedicated resources. Together, these measures aim to create a more coordinated, pragmatic and enabling ecosystem in which synergies can be more easily identified, operationalised and scaled for greater collective impact.

Innovation and market uptake

The parallel session on innovation addressed the “European paradox” and the persistent “valley of death” where many partnership-funded innovations struggle to move from demonstration to commercialisation, noting that most investment in Joint Undertakings and co programmed partnerships concentrates on mid TRLs while only a small share reaches the critical deployment and scale up phases. It stressed that the gap is not only financial but also systemic, with barriers such as limited support for first-of-a-kind deployments, insufficient regulatory and ecosystem readiness, fragmented value chains that push scale up outside Europe, and difficulties mobilising private capital. Speakers presented approaches to tackle these issues, including the Innovative SMEs Partnership pathway and ecosystem model illustrated by scale up journeys, or the EIT’s “knowledge triangle” model with examples of projects navigating certification and market adoption. Sector cases highlighted the long timeframes from idea to impact and the need for portfolio analysis, structured dialogue between industry and funders, and instruments that prepare innovations for deployment. The discussion concluded that stronger market uptake requires combining funding with regulatory alignment, value chain integration, early business involvement, standardisation support, faster transitions to deployment instruments with higher rates, and a focus on scalable and replicable solutions. Cross partnership coordination and better alignment of instruments remain essential even though links to the European Competitiveness Fund were scarcely discussed.

Phasing-out strategies

The parallel workshop on phasing out strategies explored how European Partnerships can prepare for a possible end of EU Framework Programme funding while safeguarding long term impact and legacy, stressing that phasing out is a strategic transition exercise rather than immediate termination and a legal requirement following the Horizon Europe Regulation. Participants agreed that alternative funding may still exist at EU level but often follows different logics, making hybrid public private models the most realistic yet fragile pathway, with membership fees seen as useful for sustaining core functions but not large R&I. Other EU programmes and EIB financing were discussed with reservations because they tend to favour deployment and loans. National and regional funding face the difficulties of “national return” rules and private funding is unlikely to replace public support for fundamental and precompetitive work. Major challenges include uncertainty around the Multiannual Financial Framework, FP10 and new instruments, while governance questions remain unresolved, especially how more centralised models would handle Member State roles, and national funds. Open issues for the participants seem to persist about the intent of the phasing out requirement, the future role of the Commission, public versus private responsibility for strategic R&I, and risks to equity and inclusiveness for smaller countries and organisations. The conclusion emphasised that meaningful strategies could benefit from clearer guidance and ongoing Member State - Commission dialogue and should be assessed not only for partnership sustainability but also for maintaining coherence and long-term capacity in the European Research Area.

Building a coherent and strategic portfolio of European Partnerships

The final plenary session was dedicated to building coherent, strategic portfolio of partnerships. An important issue that emerged is how a coherent portfolio can be built without losing the collaborative capacity and trust accumulated over two decades. [The Commission Expert Group on the Design and Selection of Directional Initiatives](#) framed portfolio building as a change management process proposing three scenarios that range from incremental organic reconfiguration, through a hybrid phased transition, to a disruptive comprehensive transformation that starts from scratch. The discussion stressed that credible portfolio change must cover whole value chains, reuse accumulated experience, and clarify impact pathways along with what is needed. Enabling conditions for uptake is also key since regulation, infrastructure and incentives can determine whether innovation succeeds regardless of technical quality. Regarding the premises of the portfolio approach, while the Expert Group’s suggestions are broadly agreeable, balancing competitiveness with societal and environmental goals is crucial, as is adding critical mass as a core element of relevance. The EIC shared its portfolio logic based on programme managers, and proactive management that connects projects to regulatory and market translation needs. The Partnership Knowledge Hub emphasised that the current partnership landscape is a major achievement and that trust is a prerequisite for functioning, arguing for differentiated support, flexible co funding and a careful balance between continuity and renewal. Overall, the ideal portfolio was described as clearer, more impact oriented and accessible, pushing beyond project funding toward market uptake and knowledge transfer through stronger industry

cooperation, while retaining flexibility through more modular action and more frequent strategic renewal than a single programming cycle.

The key take-aways are summarised in a [separate file on the ERA-LEARN website](#).

1.Introduction

The Partnership Stakeholder Forum 2025 brought together the community of European partnerships with the **objectives** to:

- inform on, and discuss the European Commission proposal for partnerships in the next Framework Programme (FP10),
- draw on lessons learned from the current Framework Programme and explore how partnerships will fit into the broader landscape of R&I support (European Competitiveness Fund, IPCEIs, etc.),
- provide a platform for the entire partnership community for exchange of information and experience as well as community building.

Besides representatives from Co-funded, Co-programmed and Institutionalised European Partnerships, the participants included officials from national and regional governments, public funding agencies, the private sector and other science policy makers from all over Europe and beyond that are involved in the design and implementation of European Partnerships. In total, 260 participants were able to attend physically while 120 watched the live-streaming of the plenary sessions.

The event was moderated by Charlotte Van Velthoven-Geerdink. On behalf of the Commission, Marc Lemaitre, Director-General of DG RTD, welcomed the participants and made the first key-note speech. This was followed by a presentation by Pauline Rouch, Director from DG RTD, DIR G, who presented the Commission's proposal for partnerships in the next Horizon Europe (FP10).

The format of the forum included plenary panel discussions, and parallel workshops, that addressed cross-cutting topics relevant to the partnership community. The first plenary panel discussion was dedicated to exchanging views on the Commission's proposal, while the second addressed the work of the independent Expert Group on Directional Initiatives on developing a coherent and strategic portfolio of European Partnerships.

The parallel workshops were organised in highly interactive set ups. The topics of the workshops were identified by the partnerships themselves based on a survey that was carried out before the event. Participants interested to contribute were also actively involved as speakers or discussants in the workshops. The cross-cutting themes addressed included

- Assessing and demonstrating the impact of European Partnerships (A1)
- Raising the potential for synergies and cooperation within clusters, across partnership and beyond (A2)
- Innovation and market uptake (A3)
- Phasing out strategies (A4)

Opportunities for networking were identified through a special matchmaking tool and a special area was dedicated to the resulting meetings. Partnerships were also asked beforehand to send slideshows that were then displayed on four large interactive screens on a special platform developed by ERA-LEARN.

This report summarises the key messages that were drawn from the discussions. Detailed documentation including the agenda of the event as well as the slides and video recordings are available on the event's page of the ERA-LEARN website.

2. Setting the scene for European Partnerships under FP10

Marc Lemaitre, Director-General of DG RTD, opened the event on behalf of the European Commission. His speech framed European partnerships as one of the most successful and enduring pillars of the European Research Area, rooted in collaboration and the pooling of public and private resources to tackle challenges that no single actor could address alone. Looking back over two decades, partnerships have “*transformed into something much greater, intricate forms of cooperation between public and private actors*,” capable of translating shared ambition into tangible impact, from green hydrogen to AI-driven health solutions. This legacy, however, is not treated as an argument for complacency. As Mr. Lemaitre noted “*longevity alone is no guarantee for excellence*” and despite their achievements, partnerships now face clear limits linked to complexity, fragmented governance, uneven participation and administrative burden. Against the backdrop of FP10 and the broader shift in the Multiannual Financial Framework, partnerships are positioned as a decisive bridge between excellent science and industrial deployment, ensuring that “*excellent science turns into strategic technologies at a faster and more substantive scale*”.

The core forward-looking message is that partnerships must be fundamentally reimaged to remain fit for purpose, guided by the principle of “*delivering maximum impact with minimum complexity*.” This implies discipline, focus and difficult choices, moving away from automatic continuation and institutional comfort towards a more strategic and coherent portfolio built around critical mass and clear added value. As Mr. Lemaitre underlined, “*not every idea can become a partnership*” and “*not every existing partnership should continue by default*,” because focus is framed not as a limitation but as the condition for excellence. Simplification, transparency and trust were presented as essential, supported by a unified implementation framework, clearer selection methodologies and stronger tripartite collaboration between the EU, Member States and industry. Mr. Lemaitre closed his speech with a call for realism and ambition, reminding the audience that “*commitment is not the same as impact*,” and that FP10 offers a moment to act boldly and strategically so that partnerships become leaner, faster and more impactful, delivering concrete results for Europe’s citizens and long-term competitiveness.

Pauline Rouch, Director from DG RTD, DIR G, reiterated the central role of partnerships in FP10 and the EU research and innovation policy more broadly, precisely because they mobilise public and private actors around shared strategic objectives, and create long-term investment platforms. Partnerships “*give strategic direction, build critical mass and create dynamic ecosystems*” and are therefore seen as even more important in today’s geopolitical and global competitiveness context, where Europe must strengthen technological capabilities and industrial resilience. Building on lessons from the current Framework Programme, the Commission’s proposal is underlined by a clear ambition to reimagine partnerships through a simpler, more coherent and impact-focused approach. The main aim is a “*true strategic and streamlined portfolio*” that avoids duplication, ensures coherence across themes and aligns closely with broader EU priorities for

competitiveness and resilience, while also strengthening reciprocity so that partner contributions become “*more tangible, more consistent and provide a stronger leverage for EU investment*.”

The Commission’s proposal emphasises that partnerships should remain “*special purpose vehicles*” created only where they are truly necessary, while they are explicitly described as instruments of strategic coordination, particularly for aligning and scaling investment efforts across EU, national and industry levels. To address the current fragmentation and complexity, a portfolio logic is adopted that treats partnerships as interconnected elements rather than isolated initiatives. This is supported by an evidence-based selection methodology, clearer life-cycle criteria, simplified implementation through a work-programme-based instrument, and harmonised rules on contributions and monitoring.

European Partnership provisions: The toolbox

- Simplified toolbox:
 - One default work programme-based instrument, consolidating current co-programmed and co-funded implementation modes
 - A Memorandum of Understanding sets the framework (results, reporting requirements, commitments, governance)
 - Partnership calls co-designed and co-funded with partners and implemented through the Horizon Europe work programmes
 - Central management of financial resources
 - Art. 185 and 187 in exceptional and duly justified cases
- Tripartite (Union, public, and private partners) collaborations by default



Source: Pauline Rouch, Director from DG RTD, DIR G, key-note presentation.

Transparency, openness and flexibility are highlighted as guiding principles, alongside continuous monitoring and credible exit strategies to prevent the accumulation of legacy structures. A tight connection is also foreseen between the Framework Programme and the European Competitiveness Fund to “*create a seamless pathway from research to deployment and close the innovation gap that is often pointed as a weakness of the Union*.” Overall, the reforms aim to ensure that “*every euro mobilised through partnerships delivers better, more measurable results for Europe*,” positioning partnerships as a core driver of the Union’s competitiveness and resilience.

The panel discussion¹ that followed addressed the role of the partnerships in FP10 along with feedback on the Commission’s proposal and the portfolio approach.

Across the discussion, the **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** was one of the areas where there was clearer positive sentiment, especially compared to the current grant agreement-based

¹ The panel “Shaping Collaboration: European Partnerships under FP10” included Pauline Rouch, European Commission, Director of DG RTD, DIR G, Alexandre Affre, Deputy Director-General, BusinessEurope, Lucie Nunez, Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Director of the Department of R&D, Benedicte Løseth, Research Council of Norway, Executive Director - Research System and Internationalisation, and Piri Lindholm, Director at the European Regions Research & Innovation network (ERRIN).

implementation. As it was stressed by a speaker, “*a single MoU for the full duration, coupled with a mid-term evaluation, is a step in the right direction*”. The current landscape is portrayed as “chaotic”, and the problem is not only rigidity but also a kind of uneven and excessive flexibility, where what is allowed differs from partnership to partnership in ways that are hard to justify or navigate. At the same time, speakers remained cautious about the MoU’s content: there is agreement in principle, but multiple interventions stressed that it is too early to judge without seeing what level of detail is expected, what exactly will be monitored, and how evaluation will work in practice. There is also a clear expectation that the MoU should anchor results orientation, reporting requirements, and governance commitments, which again highlights a desire for predictability and harmonisation.

The proposal for **central financial management** was treated as a potential remedy for the current administrative and procedural complexity of cascading funding and as a leaner, more transparent, and easier way of tracking what is invested and how. The funders and member state voices were broadly open to the idea, but they repeatedly framed their support as conditional on implementation details that have not yet been revealed. Speakers wanted clarity on the rules, procedures, and safeguards, and they underlined that centralisation always carries both upsides and downsides. As the funders stressed, if central financial management is introduced, it must be signalled years in advance so national systems can plan and create feedback loops, otherwise centralisation risks becoming another misalignment factor rather than a solution.

Regarding the Commission’s **new partnership approach**, the dominant thread was that the reform is meant to compensate for Europe’s structural weakness in coordination and to make EU funding more impactful. In this regard, the portfolio approach and the simplification of the partnership landscape were presented as instruments to make coordination “leaner” and therefore more effective. At the same time, it is important to harmonise rules for partner contributions and to ensure that partners contribute financially as well as in-kind, which is framed as part of making partnerships more credible as shared undertakings by all three major cohorts, i.e. member states, the Commission and the business/ industry communities.

The Commission clarified that the **selection criteria** included in the proposal were designed to streamline the landscape and improve focus, while reassuring that involvement of all parties in making decisions is essential. While there was broad agreement on the selection criteria included in the new proposal, speakers stressed that the decisive factor is implementation. At the same time, the selection criteria should address the push for increased market and societal readiness, as partnerships articulate impact pathways beyond research outputs toward deployment and uptake. The importance of societal impact, besides economic / technological, was also highlighted in this regard.

From the **European business perspective**, the new approach was welcomed primarily for what partnerships already do well, namely structured collaboration and leverage, but this support is paired with pointed warnings about contribution rules and practical incentives to participate. Partnerships have historically delivered high leverage effects and companies value the structured collaboration between public and private sides, so expectations for the new design are high. Yet, it is important to understand that in-kind inputs can be substantial and are central to how industry engages. At the same time, businesses need to be involved during planning and programming because they understand sector needs and can help partnerships remain responsive to challenges, shocks and geopolitical shifts.

The **regions' perspective** was shaped by a sense of underutilisation and structural exclusion in parts of the current system, alongside a constructive vision of what could change. As noted, some partnerships do not allow local and regional governments to participate, and even where regions are present in institutionalised partnerships their role is often limited to stakeholder groups focused on funding synergies rather than strategic engagement. Their forward-looking argument is that the point is not to add “the region” symbolically, but to mobilise territorial ecosystems, link partnership priorities to regional innovation strategies and smart specialisation, and strengthen a genuinely tripartite model that includes the regional dimension. Regions also see themselves as channels for societal as well as economic impact, and they link the partnership approach to mission oriented transformation agendas that resonate strongly at local and regional level. While flexibility is appreciated, the bigger barrier is the strength of facilitation and engagement processes, especially for smaller actors who find partnership participation complex.

The **practical challenges** of aligning national and European funding frameworks comes through as a very concrete, operational problem. Based on a Member State perspective, even when national priorities are largely aligned with European ones, alignment can still fail because decision making and budgeting processes follow different rhythms at national level than the timelines of partnership calls, creating persistent synchronisation problems. The remedy proposed is not magic harmonisation, but early involvement, long and transparent planning and budgeting, and close coupling between national portfolio boards and the people representing countries in Horizon Europe governance so that selection and implementation phases do not drift apart. While a perfect fit is “*very ambitious*”, improvement is possible if partnerships are planned in a longer term perspective and if portfolio steering is treated as an ongoing process.

On the **portfolio approach**, the Commission positioned it as the organising logic that connects impact, coordination, and simplification. The Commission also clarified that a portfolio does not equal to automatically bigger entities, stressing that the intention is a smaller number of partnerships but not necessarily large ones, with the focus placed on meaning and impact rather than scale for its own sake. While the portfolio approach was endorsed in principle, the member states stressed that portfolio logic can work well only with long term planning and the right institutional links, and that streamlining should not erase the long-term trust and cooperation built among ministries, agencies, and industry, which is a precondition for portfolio governance to function effectively.

If one element stands out as most crucial for making FP10 partnerships successful, it is the combination of early, systematic involvement with credible, predictable rules that participants can plan around. Different speakers came at this from different angles, but they converged on the same practical logic: central financial management only helps if it reduces complexity without creating new uncertainty, alignment only improves with long lead times and transparent planning, the portfolio approach only works if it builds on existing expertise and trust, and industry engagement depends on simple procedures and fair contribution rules.

3. Addressing cross-cutting issues

The parallel sessions that followed addressed in more detail topics that were also highlighted in the key-note presentations and the panel discussion, including impact, synergies, innovation and market uptake and phasing out strategies. The topics of the parallel sessions were defined beforehand together with the partnership community.

This section summarises the views that were shared by the panellists and the participants in the parallel workshops.

Assessing and demonstrating the impact of European Partnerships (A.1)

The aim of the workshop was to:

- Discuss unique impact pathways and specific approaches to impact assessment that have been applied by partnerships in their respective domains.
- Showcase the wide range of impacts that the partnerships can generate, spanning the policy, economic, environmental and social realms.
- Identify ‘recipes’ for impact creation in highly dynamic and demanding contexts: the necessary factors and ingredients that any such journey should have.

The session included a panel discussion among representatives of European Partnerships across different clusters. As various partnerships (e.g. the newly funded EIT Culture and Creativity and long-standing partnerships such Clean Aviation, Clean Hydrogen, and Innovative Health Initiative or the Metrology Partnership) strive to strengthen European competitiveness, they seek the best recipe for impact that creates social value alongside financial sustainability. The discussion was framed by the reality that while impact is always very relevant, it remains very challenging to showcase as a wide variety of (or types of) impacts exist, from policy and societal to systemic, market, and economy-related impacts.

The session served as a collective effort to assess impact pathways in specific sectors and demonstrate how research results are used by stakeholders to create tangible outcomes. Impact is an inherent feature in the operation, design, and vision of every partnership.

Perception and monitoring of impact

The panellists shared insights on how their partnerships perceive and monitor impact through unique methodologies and analytical frameworks. For example, EIT Culture and Creativity defines impact as

- Strengthening Europe's cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI)
- Accelerating innovation capacity across regions
- Enabling cross-sector value creation (culture × tech × industry × research), and
- Achieving both financial sustainability and societal value.

This includes **systemic impact across education, business creation, and innovation ecosystems**. Their approach to impact assessment combines various routes and levels of reference, focusing on **financial sustainability and creating long-term social value**.



Approach to Impact

- Combining cultural value with economic innovation
- Systemic approach across education, innovation, and business creation
- Embedding co-creation and mission-driven models
- Working across 15 CCSI sub-sectors with very diverse value chains
- Operating a blended financing model (grant + equity-like instruments such as SAFEs, future exit strategies)
- Strong focus on regional cohesion and RIS transformation

Source: Anette Schaefer, CEO EIT Culture & Creativity

In the Clean Aviation partnership, there has been a move toward measurable and quantified targets that are time-bound, shifting from mere technology advancements to pushing the introduction of the future generation of aircraft into the market. This involves a unique impact monitoring function that uses not only the classic **Technology Readiness Level (TRL)** but also **a Certification Readiness Level (CRL)** methodology to anticipate pre-certification requirements during the research stage. This approach is complemented by Partnership-specific KPIs geared towards sustainability, competitiveness, and socio-economic impacts.

Clean Aviation Impact Monitoring approach – Part I

Quantified & timebound objectives for sustainability & competitiveness set in the SBA (technology efficiency targets and future aircrafts "EIS")

Requirements setting and definition:
SBA → SRiA → Strategic Planning → Work Programmes → Calls → Projects

Impact Monitoring Function: (CAJU specific SBA provision)

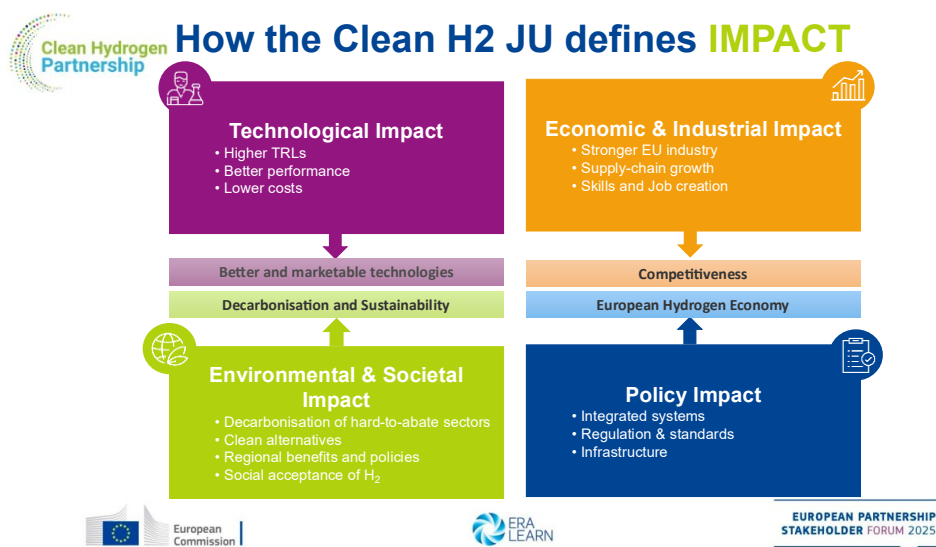
- Monitor and assess technological progress at projects level towards the programme objectives and in terms of integration at aircraft concepts level
- Impact-specific DLV set at project level to feed the process
- In addition to TRL targets, CRL (Certification Readiness Level) a new methodology co-designed with EASA and applicable to projects



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Source: Bruno Mastantuono, Head of the Governance Unit of the Clean Aviation Joint Undertaking

Similarly, the Clean Hydrogen partnership uses an analytical framework to **connect operational actions to bigger macro-level objectives** of the Commission, focusing on translating research into deployment **pathways that can be scaled and replicated** throughout Europe. This is facilitated by the fact that hydrogen is synergetic by nature, connecting transport, energy and other industries. Moreover, the development of "hydrogen valleys" provides a strategic value chain enabling mobilisation of regional and national actors.



Source: Inês Moura Martins, Clean Hydrogen Partnership, Stakeholders Relationship and Communication Officer.

In the health sector, the Innovative Health Initiative works on developing new tools, methodologies, and guidelines that accelerate the development of medicines for the benefit of patients and the healthcare system. The **anticipated impacts** on understanding health treatment, integrate R&I efforts, demonstrate feasibility of solutions and developing assessment methodologies are **directly linked to the high-level objectives** of the partnership.



Source: Magali Poinot, Innovative Health Initiative Joint Undertaking, Head of the Governance Team

In the area of quality infrastructure, Metrology, provides the foundational trust in measurement and traceability necessary for mass manufacturing and industrial competitiveness. The main **criterion for impact is the level of uptake of results** by their stakeholders. The key KPI is the European turnover from new or significantly improved products and services that can be attributed to the research activities of the metrology partnerships. For the call years 2009 – 2017, the metrology partnerships have generated a cumulative demonstrable economic benefit of 1,6 billion euros.

The panellists shared **success stories** demonstrating a diverse set of impact types across the different sectors.

Challenges in capturing long-term impacts

The discussion that followed addressed the entrepreneurial spirit, debating how to bridge the **diverse objectives of its stakeholders**, especially those of large industry members and startups to ensure the European scale-ups can aspire to a market conducive of growth. The conversation further explored other cross-cutting activities such as the **identification of gaps in terms of regulations or standards**. The panel noted that while monitoring is a 'must', following from the HE regulation, to demonstrate the value of the investments in partnerships, certain monitoring practices can be seen as a "*huge administrative burden*" for participants.

The discussion with the audience highlighted that the measurement of impact is a long and complicated process. It often takes ten or more years to finally quantify the economic impact of a project therefore its measurement can only be estimated. A critical remark was about the existence of a **'speed gap' relative to global competitors**. For instance, clinical trials in China were noted as being five times faster and cheaper than in Europe, or aircraft production pace is three to four times higher in China than in Europe.

A useful recipe for impact

Participants noted that Europe is more risk averse than the more dynamic economies (i.e. US and China) and lacks the appetite of investors found in other markets to **nurture and scale startups**. Though the **role of regulator** is rather important and should be preserved/enhanced ("*who'd want to participate in a clinical trial in China?*"), **cultural differences** are also a factor, as "*what works in the Nordic region doesn't work in the Iberian region*" when addressing social cohesion and transformation. It was also noted that to avoid fragmentation – and avoid that startups shop around (out of Europe) for funding –, **bottom-up agility** should be preserved and encouraged in setting and adapting strategies so that "*when we do not know what's coming*" we can have enough variety and competition to "*pivot quickly and remain agile*".



Source: Slido responses to the questions 'what is your recipe for impact creation?'

The panel found that a useful recipe for impact must take into consideration the **speed of operations, enhanced cooperation, and the pursuit of openness** to unlock innovation ecosystems. It was also emphasised that impact never materialises unless the results are used, raising the question of **added value**, specifically whether partnerships provide **resources for 'readiness building'** or merely money that could be found elsewhere.

To conclude, the proposed impact recipe stresses speed, stronger cooperation and openness, readiness building so results are adopted, active roles in regulations and standards, and agile bottom-up strategy adaptation to avoid fragmentation and keep momentum across programmes.

Raising the potential for synergies and cooperation within clusters, across partnerships and beyond (A.2)

The aim of this session was to share experiences, including good practices and common challenges that affect cooperation and the development of synergies, and to jointly develop approaches and solutions to address these challenges identified in areas such as instruments, collaboration topics, governance arrangements, cross-partnership cooperation, and synergies beyond partnership boundaries.

The first part included four partnerships sharing their experiences with synergies revealing different problematics that were then further discussed in a world café setting. The Built4People Partnership focused on the need to avoid red tape issues and the different particularities of each type of partnership and how they relate to their work programmes and stakeholders involved. The importance of involving related initiatives was remarked both in and out of the partnership ecosystem to improve the impact of the synergies and growth of networks. SESAR JU shared their experience in mobilising resources to accelerate the market uptake also including funds beyond Horizon Europe (e.g. SET Plan, Connecting Europe Facility-CEF), while developing cross-partnerships initiatives such as a synergy code with another JU, Europe's Rail, to generate intermodality projects. In addition, the SESAR JU actively engages in sharing programme excellence and lessons learnt with other Joint Undertakings without the need of a regulation mandate, in view of optimising the tight resources all JUs have and being considerably satisfied with the results of this exchange.

The Made in Europe representative focused on the need to optimise the synergies efforts and engage with relevant initiatives. As noted, the problems of establishing synergies face certain challenges such as determining the cost and assigning responsibility of joint events, and the need to limit the coordination efforts to ensure efficiency. Made in Europe put the emphasis in strengthening the engagement of regions, member states and relevant stakeholders as guided by their concept and goals, without overstretching efforts for synergies. The presentation of the Sustainable Blue Economy addressed the overlapping of call topics with other initiatives and the challenge of connecting projects in portfolios, as well as the difficulty of involving projects in activities for which there is no funding available. Their efforts included contacting the projects individually to join the portfolios and raising the interest in the activities to make them work together, produce outputs and share knowledge.

Finally, ERA-LEARN presented their ongoing data-science-based analysis on topics with collaboration potential between partnerships. With a data-driven approach, objectives of SRIAs are extracted and compared. The future results may possibly flow into a searchable tool that enables partnerships and other stakeholders to identify collaboration topics across all partnerships.



Source: ERA-LEARN presentation: Results of SRIA-analysis for the attribution of partnerships in the topic “Energy Transition” active per measured R&I sub-topic (Figure by ERA-LEARN, 2025)

The world café discussions that followed repeated some of these challenges, while also sharing additional ones, that largely covered the operation of the partnerships, which if not optimal puts additional hurdles in cross-partnership cooperation. The challenges noted also focused on the coordination aspect and shared spaces and tools, guidance and practices which are crucial in synergy creation. Participants suggested possible solutions that largely overlapped across the different areas covered.

Challenges

Creating synergies across partnerships is widely recognised as both necessary and difficult. The challenges are systemic, cutting across governance, instruments, operational collaboration, and engagement beyond the partnership landscape.

A central challenge lies in **governance fragmentation**. Partnerships operate under different governance models, timelines, procedures and decision-making cultures, which limits interoperability and makes coordinated action difficult. Governance structures are often perceived as inefficient and overly complex, while offering **little concrete guidance on how synergies** should be identified, prioritised or implemented. This is compounded by **unclear allocation of responsibilities**, as well as by **limited resources** and **weak information-sharing** practices.

From an **instruments'** perspective, the **bottom-up nature of many programmes**, combined with **experimental or ad-hoc calls**, makes structured collaboration challenging. There is a **lack of dedicated financial and legal instruments** designed specifically to support cross-partnership collaboration. Partnerships struggle to share resources, align funding partners, or involve additional funders under different rules and constraints. **Administrative complexity, long evaluation timelines, micromanagement and heavy reporting** requirements further discourage joint initiatives and reduce incentives to collaborate.

Operationally, **cross-partnership collaboration** is hindered by a highly **fragmented landscape**. **Differences in rules, funding instruments, terminology and work programme** structures make it difficult to identify common ground or even speak a shared “language” when exploring synergies. **Limited administrative capacity** and **scarce resources** restrict the ability of partnerships to invest time in coordination, joint scoping or harmonisation efforts. As a result, collaboration often remains informal, opportunistic and dependent on personal networks rather than being embedded in systematic processes.

Challenges become even more pronounced when **collaboration extends beyond partnerships**. Engaging actors outside the research community, such as societal organisations, regional ecosystems or international initiatives, is constrained by capacity limits, misaligned timelines, unclear interfaces and the absence of dedicated mechanisms to identify complementarities. In particular, the **lack of structured interfaces** between partnerships and EU Missions, as well as with international and global initiatives operating under different governance and funding logics, makes strategic alignment difficult.

At the same time, **identifying concrete collaboration topics** remains a persistent difficulty. Partnerships often **lack visibility** into each other's strategic priorities, planned activities, target groups and expected TRL progression. Joint actions are therefore planned on an **ad-hoc basis, with limited foresight and coordination**. Uncertainty around future Framework Programmes further complicates long-term planning. While analytical tools and mapping exercises are emerging, the challenge remains to translate information into timely, actionable joint planning without turning synergy creation into a rigid, box-ticking exercise.

Suggested solutions

The discussions identified a broad and coherent set of solutions that emphasise the need for **stronger coordination mechanisms, more flexible and enabling instruments, and practical tools** that support collaboration both **within and beyond the partnership landscape**.

A first cluster of solutions focuses on **strengthening governance arrangements**. Participants underlined the importance of establishing ‘neutral’ coordination mechanisms, such as cross-partnership working groups, shared steering structures or independent facilitators, to enable collaboration without privileging individual partnerships. These structures would provide a common space for alignment, reduce fragmentation and support regular dialogue across initiatives. Clearer and more harmonised governance frameworks were also seen as essential, including **joint mandates** that define roles, responsibilities and shared objectives while allowing sufficient **flexibility** to accommodate different partnership models. **Simplifying procedures, reporting requirements and decision-making processes** would help reduce administrative burden and improve efficiency. To make these governance solutions effective, participants stressed the need for **adequate administrative capacity**, supported by **shared tools** such as harmonised templates, joint impact metrics, shared KPIs and co-funded coordination activities.

In terms of instruments, solutions centred on **creating incentives and practical enablers for collaboration**. Participants proposed **earlier and more coordinated planning** of work programmes, with systematic **involvement of other partnerships** from the outset. **Dedicated financial support**, such as additional European Commission funding, prizes or ring-fenced budgets for cross-partnership activities, was seen as a powerful lever to encourage joint actions. Greater **flexibility in funding arrangements** was also emphasised, including the possibility to engage **alternative funders** and accommodate parallel or blended funding models. Practical mechanisms such as **matchmaking** activities, **access to pools of experts, topic-search tools, joint calls and co-organised events** were identified as ways to lower entry barriers and make collaboration more operational. **Simplification measures**, including common portals, shorter evaluation timelines, acceptance of in-kind contributions and avoidance of excessive micromanagement and reporting, were considered crucial to sustain engagement.

For cross-partnership collaboration, participants highlighted the value of building shared practices and operational coherence. Establishing **communities of practice** would foster trust, shared language and habitual cooperation across partnerships. **Administrative efficiency** could be improved by reusing templates, pooling expertise and standardising processes, enabling faster scoping, testing and joint delivery. Participants also proposed developing **coordinated work programmes with aligned topics and synchronised calls**, allowing partnerships to respect different rules while achieving joint outcomes. Regular **joint events**, such as thematic days, clustering workshops or road-mapping exercises, supported by consolidated budgets and light governance structures, were seen as effective ways to identify overlaps, align priorities and avoid duplication. **Flexible financial instruments and dedicated collaboration budgets** were considered essential to cover coordination costs and shared outputs. Tools, such as public “how

to collaborate” **guidance** notes and **activity maps**, would further facilitate engagement and opportunity spotting.

Beyond partnerships, solutions focused on broadening **collaboration through complementarity**, not just thematic overlaps, covering topics as user access, regulatory know-how, technical infrastructure, communication and societal outreach and skills and training capabilities. Participants stressed the importance of engaging national and regional ecosystems, societal actors, industry alliances and international initiatives to build multi-actor value chains. Partnerships can collaborate with industry alliances, clusters and sector specific platforms to accelerate innovation uptake and broaden impact. **Flexible coordination structures**, such as joint working groups, shared foresight activities and informal thematic networks, would enable collaboration without imposing heavy administrative burdens. **Improving the visibility** and use of **existing guidance tools**, including the **ERA-LEARN tool for the identification of collaboration topics across partnerships**, was seen as key to helping partnerships navigate the landscape and identify relevant entry points. **Bottom-up initiatives** were encouraged to leverage existing European, national and regional programmes, infrastructures and innovation hubs to ground collaboration in real-world contexts. Participants pointed the value of engaging actors such as New European Bauhaus, CEF transport and energy initiatives, education and skills programmes, the Gates Foundation and other initiatives beyond that EU landscape, that can offer new perspectives and societal engagement. As noted, they should build common priorities with them to co-create the synergies considering also their experience and particularities.

To address the persistent difficulty of identifying collaboration topics, participants supported the development of **coordination support functions and analytical tools**. The planning of joint activities is currently on an ad-hoc basis, based on a limited insight into the strategic orientations of other PS, and the need expressed by stakeholders for clearer information on target groups per topic or planned R&I activity, as well as on Technology Readiness Level (TRL) progression.

ERA-LEARN presented its work on developing a tool to facilitate an ongoing systematic analysis of potential topics based on the partnership strategic research and innovation agendas, and identification of possible collaboration topics. The participants considered the **tool an important step towards navigating the partnership landscape**. It would significantly **increase efficiency** for multiple stakeholder groups, including actors beyond partnerships, facilitating topic identification and enabling earlier joint planning. It was proposed to discuss the results of this analysis in a working group of cross-partnerships synergies to steer joint-planning, and was emphasized that the **tool should serve as inspiration and guidance**, not as a mandatory “box-ticking” exercise. Participants expressed also the possibilities of the tool to explore topics at different levels of details, from broad themes such as “sustainable agriculture” to specific areas like “circular water management in agriculture” and the possible limitations, as it focuses on content, not TRL steps and target groups. Notwithstanding, the tool can anyway create a basis for partnerships to discuss bilaterally or in groups if they found a suitable collaboration topic.

Triggered by the presentation of the ERA-LEARN tool, they stressed that systematic **analyses of strategic research agendas and searchable topic-mapping tools** were seen as important

enablers for earlier and more informed joint planning. These tools should support dialogue and inspiration rather than impose rigid requirements, allowing partnerships to explore collaboration opportunities at different levels of thematic detail and adapt them case by case. Together, these solutions point towards a **more coordinated, flexible and pragmatic ecosystem in which synergies can emerge more naturally** and deliver greater collective impact.

Overall, the main challenges in creating synergies are a combination of fragmented governance, misaligned instruments, limited resources, administrative burden, and insufficient mechanisms for coordination, visibility and strategic alignment across an increasingly complex partnership landscape. The discussions outlined a coherent set of solutions to overcome structural, procedural and cultural barriers to collaboration across partnerships and beyond. Key priorities included stronger and more neutral governance arrangements, flexible coordination structures, simplified and harmonised procedures, adequate administrative capacity, common spaces supported by shared tools and metrics, along with better analytical tools and guidance as well as activities for collaboration.

Innovation and market uptake (A.3)

Session A3 discussed the so called ‘European paradox’ (the challenge of translating research outcomes into competitive, market-ready solutions). The goal of this session was to facilitate an interactive exchange on experiences and challenges for research-driven innovation by sharing lessons learnt and good practices, addressing for example how to engage industry, bring results to the market, contribute to the development of standards, and how to provide value for society.

At the start of the sessions, insights from the European Commission’s “Scaling up ideas” report were highlighted, drawing attention to sample projects funded within European Partnerships. In the Joint Undertakings, most investment (71%) is focused on TRL 4–6, facilitating the shift from research to application. Only 29% targets TRL 7–9, limiting support for market entry and scale-up. For the co-programmed partnerships, 86% of funding addresses TRL 5–7, while a mere 10% is allocated to TRL 8–9, i.e. the critical deployment phase.² This reveals an ongoing “valley of death” in funding, the crucial stage between lab demonstration and commercialization, where many innovations falter due to insufficient support.

Systemic Barriers and the "Valley of Death"

The session critically examined the systemic barriers beyond the financial investment that is needed to bridge the commercialisation gap. The discussion revealed several key issues including:

² The report had no data for the co-funded partnerships.

- **insufficient funding** for First-Of-A-Kind (FOAK) Deployments: groundbreaking solutions at TRL 8 often stall without tailored support;
- **regulatory and ecosystem readiness**: market uptake requires early and coordinated engagement with regulatory authorities and ecosystem actors, not just financial backing;
- **complex permitting processes**: lengthy and fragmented procedures impede innovation deployment and scale-up;
- **fragmented value chains**: the lack of coordinated public and private investment results in promising innovations being scaled up outside Europe;
- **private investment mobilisation**: flexible funding instruments are required to attract private capital and fully exploit the high commercial potential of European R&I.

The invited speakers showcased progressive approaches of different partnerships in tackling these barriers. For instance, the Innovative SMEs Partnership, supporting SME innovation and TRL progression, applies a **pathway approach and ecosystem engagement** to help bring new technologies to market. In exemplifying their approach two success stories were presented including the French HPC company *Qarnot* that started with a 50K early-stage research grant from the EIC and EIT Digital support. It then received Eurostars grant funding to develop its eco-friendly cloud computing modules. Eventually the company built an EIC Accelerator application on this technology and subsequently raised nearly EUR 40M in public and private funding. In similar lines, the German Scaleup *constellr*, that deploys microsatellites for predictive infrastructure maintenance and smart agriculture, exemplified rapid innovation-to-market pathways.

German scaleup *constellr* deploys unique microsatellites that enable predictive maintenance for infrastructure and inform smart agriculture.

In a **Eurostars** project with Spanish and German organisations, *constellr* developed a system for predicting water stress in soil and anticipate signs of water deficiency in crops. *constellr* subsequently participated in an **Innowide** project, using earth observation systems for smart irrigation in Morocco.

constellr has also received scaleup support from the EIC Accelerator and EIT Food.

eureka

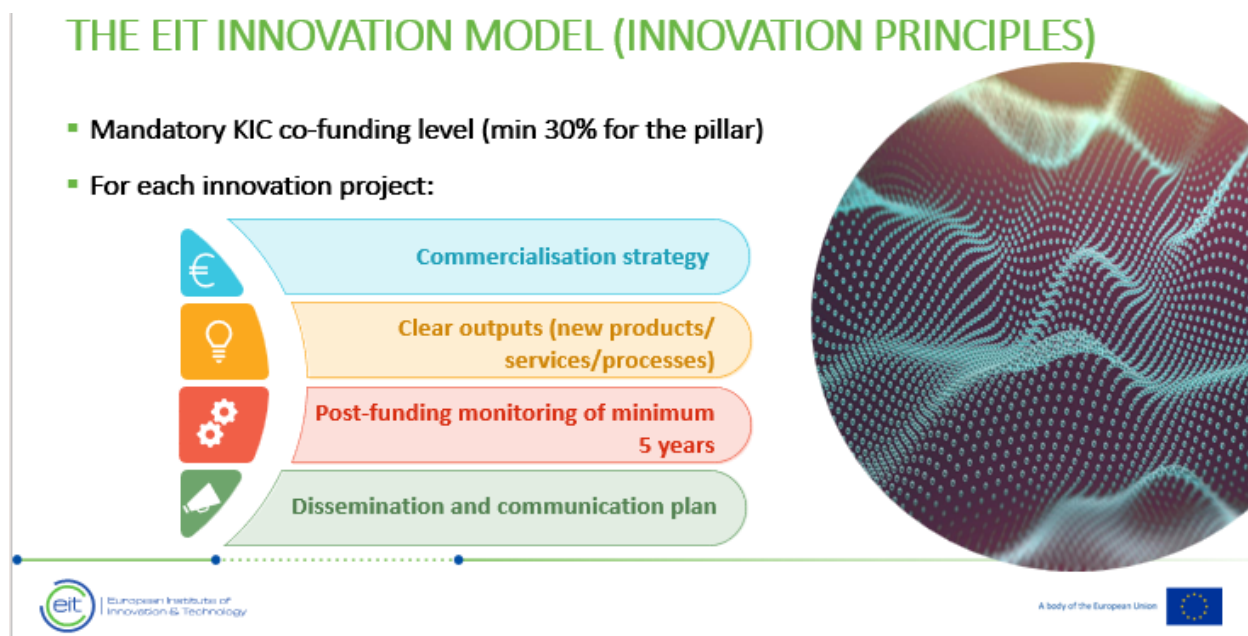


"Eureka projects allowed us to explore the commercial and application side. The EIC and EIT Food provided structural and larger financing for core developments such as an improved satellite design or key components of our software infrastructure for satellite operations and data processing. Hence, we found all these support mechanisms to be very complementary."

Max Gulde, CEO at *constellr*

Source: Denisa Naidin, Programme Development Lead - Innovative SME Partnership

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) leverages the “**knowledge triangle**” (business, higher education, research) to foster entrepreneurship, upskill talent, and accelerate the scale-up of start-ups and new ventures. The EIT innovation model features specific characteristics at both the co-funding level and the individual project level, while educational programmes exist for HEI-students, SMEs- RTOs and SMEs-startups spanning a variety of topics (from doctoral courses and summer schools or internships to IP advisory and access to finance or business skills development), to facilitate the innovation journey.



Source: Alessandra Pala, Head of the Grant Implementation Unit at the EIT

The EIT intervention also shared some success stories including for example,

- **SAVE-COR/ACORYS®**: that developed a novel, AI-enabled medical device for cardiac diagnostics, successfully navigating regulatory certification with EIT Health support.
- **IMPULSE** that delivers a real-time e-bus fleet management platform, reducing operational costs and facilitating widescale market adoption through support from EIT Urban Mobility.

The Process4Planet illustrated the lengthy journey from idea to impact (10–20 years for process manufacturing), emphasising the need for **specific assistance** in bringing innovations to deployment. The way the partnership addresses this need is through

- an impact panel that brings industry and funders to dialogue,
- portfolio Analysis to identify and monitor innovations readiness for future FOAKs, and
- the CID flagship call supporting CSAs (access to the IF), which was highlighted as a trend in the right direction to be strengthened in FP10.

... and a trend in the right direction to be strengthened in FP10



Source: Raquel Martinez-Torruella, Innovation Manager A.SPIRE

The Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport Partnership demonstrated the sector's drive to adopt new fuels, electrification, and operational models to achieve emission targets, highlighting the importance of **systematic deployment**. In air traffic management, the SESAR 3 JU experience highlighted that **regulatory alignment** (through the Common Projects and the Air Traffic Management Master Plan) and **industrialisation support** are key to accelerating market entry of high-TRL solutions in a safety-critical environment.

SESAR 3 JU shapes future regulations to facilitate market uptake: the Common Projects (CP)



Common Projects are **Implementing Regulations** by the Commission

- **Draft** elaborated by the SESAR 3 JU
- Makes Strategic Deployment Objectives (from the Master Plan) **mandatory** under EU law for a given scope of stakeholders and by a given deadline

Elaboration of **CP2 is ongoing**, after a Pilot CP (in 2014) and CP1 (in 2021).

Need to involve all relevant stakeholders, including **regulatory** (EASA) and **standardisation** (EUROCAE)

Deployment supported by EU funding through the CEF (**50% of EU co-funding**)

Implemented by operational stakeholders (ANSPs, airports, airlines, etc.) with the support of the **SESAR Deployment Manager**

CP2 is based on the SDOs of the ATM Master Plan



Source: Alain Siebert, Chief Technology and Strategy, Sesar JU

The session concluded with a focus on actionable strategies to strengthen Europe's innovation landscape. As highlighted, **innovation funding must be matched with regulatory alignment, value chain integration, and additional measures to de-risk investments**, which is critical especially for SMEs and first movers. Transitioning from Horizon Europe to deployment-focused instruments supporting innovation requires mechanisms for higher funding rates and fast-tracking high-potential projects. An **ecosystem approach is vital for market success** with both cross-sector and sectoral partnerships, coupled with **early business involvement. Regulatory and financial readiness** is key through early engagement with regulators and alignment with standardisation support to smoother market transitions. **Financial maturity and industrialisation capacity** are decisive for scaling impact. The focus should be on innovations with potential for broad deployment (scalability and replicability) ensuring systemic impact across the European R&I ecosystem.

To conclude, European Partnerships have made important strides in supporting the journey from research to market, yet challenges persist, particularly in scaling innovations beyond demonstration. Many of those barriers, as highlighted by the audience, are common across sectors. Thus, a coordinated approach to market uptake may make sense across partnerships. Strengthening the strategic alignment of funding instruments is key; yet, as some participants noted, the link to the European Competitiveness Fund was hardly discussed. Fostering systematic knowledge exchange and embedding the business perspective from the outset are also crucial.

Phasing out strategies (A.4)

The workshop on phasing-out Strategies of European Partnerships discussed how partnerships can prepare for a potential discontinuation of funding from the EU Framework Programme while safeguarding their long-term impact, relevance, and legacy. The workshop aimed at:

- Deepening the understanding of the goals, processes and timing for developing phasing-out strategies in different partnership contexts.
- Identifying common success factors and challenges in ensuring sustainability beyond EU framework funding.
- Providing a space for experience sharing and co-creation of preliminary ideas feeding into future sustainability actions and the 2026 Financial Sustainability Workshop.
- Exploring diverse income/ co-financing generation models (public, private, hybrid) and their applicability across partnership types.
- Strengthening the cross-partnership dialogue to build a more coherent strategy for sustainability.

Following the Horizon Europe Regulation, partnerships are expected to develop ex-ante phasing-out strategies that outline credible scenarios beyond EU Framework Programme funding. Importantly, the workshop reaffirmed that phasing out should not be understood as an immediate termination of partnerships, but rather as a strategic planning exercise that strengthens resilience, policy agility, and sustainability.

Against this background, the workshop brought together a diverse group of stakeholders representing different partnership types, Member States, funding agencies, and the European Commission. Discussions demonstrated that while the legal obligation to prepare phasing-out strategies is well understood, the practical, financial, and strategic implications remain complex and, in many cases, unresolved. The exchanges highlighted strong heterogeneity across partnerships but also revealed several cross-cutting issues that merit attention at portfolio level.

Funding Alternatives Beyond the Framework Programme

For continuing partnership operations in case funding through the Framework Programme ends, the **availability and feasibility of alternative funding sources** is of utmost importance. Participants broadly agreed that phasing out Horizon Europe funding does not automatically imply a complete withdrawal of EU-level support. However, alternative funding instruments typically come with a different logic and scope, which may significantly affect the nature of partnership activities. The discussions pointed towards **hybrid models** combining different public and private sources as the most realistic funding pathway, albeit one that is complex, partnership-specific, and potentially fragile. The following funding alternatives have been taken into consideration in the discussions:

- **Membership fees**, combined with appropriate institutional or legal arrangements, are seen as a viable option for safeguarding basic partnership operations in a post-Framework Programme context. While

Draft Phasing out strategy DUT Partnership

DUT Driving Urban Transitions

Elements of public/private co-financing/ income

- (Co-)funding from the **EC**
 - FP10 instruments
 - European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)
 - Potential links with Urban Agenda
- Co-funding and in-kind from **Member States**
- **Private** funding
- **Membership fees**

Challenges and potential solutions

- **Combining** public and private funding
- Ensuring **long-term financial predictability**
- Keeping pace with **evolving regulatory and budgetary** frameworks
- Anticipating and adapting to **shifting policy priorities**
- Aligning and joining forces with **other partnerships**
- Balancing thematic ambitions with **administrative feasibility**

Open issues

- Outcome of **FP10** and **MFF** negotiations
- Level of engagement and commitment from **Member States**
- **Timeline** and process for stakeholder engagement and positioning
- Implications for **DUT's identity and scope** – positioning within a simplified FP10 landscape

such fees are not considered sufficient to finance large-scale R&I activities, they were repeatedly identified as a practical means to sustain core functions such as strategic coordination, planning, networking, and governance. Participants emphasised that the effectiveness of this approach depends on clearly demonstrating added value to members and on establishing suitable organisational structures—potentially including a dedicated legal entity—to manage fee collection and operational responsibilities in a transparent and sustainable manner.

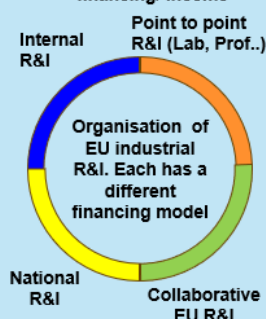
- **Other EU funding programmes** and instruments were frequently mentioned as potential sources, but these are often more oriented towards deployment, market uptake, or infrastructure than towards fundamental research and early-stage innovation. As a result, relying on such sources would likely require partnerships to adapt their portfolios and move closer to market-oriented activities. Financing through the European Investment Bank was discussed in this context as well, but with notable reservations, as EIB instruments are primarily designed for loans and large-scale deployment rather than for low-TRL research or coordination-heavy activities typical of many partnerships.

- **National and regional funding** was seen as another possible pillar of post-framework financing. At the same time, Member State representatives emphasised that national public funds are frequently bound

Draft Phasing out strategy

6G SNS

Elements of public/private co-financing/ income



Challenges and potential solutions

- Maintain SRIA EU wide R&I strategy
- Stimulation of EU R&I spin-off towards standardization, spectrum policy
- EU wide tech push/pull market approach
- Synergies across complementary academic/SME actors at EU level
- EU Directionality and alignment
- Large scale pilots, R&I life cycle (Heitor, PKH reports)
- Partnerships linkages (Draghi rep. spin off)
- Day to day alignment with EC policies
- Possible Paths: a. No funding – breaking the cycle – fragmentation and not pan-EU solutions. b. Partial: light EU coordination (CSA type) – minor pan-EU impact; c. Tighter EU coordination: p-p partnership leveraging national efforts; or IPCEI (not all EU – critical for academia and SMEs); ad-hoc cluster 4 like approach (industry drive?); synergy with other partnerships (minimum results without ex-ante agreements – joint planning);

Open issues

- Full alignment with EC policies;
- Long term visibility aligned;
- Critical mass towards EU spin-offs (std, spectrum, regulation..)
- Critical mass for EU wide lead market
- R&I – deployment linkages (Heitor report)
- R&I multi disciplinary policy (Draghi report)
- Fragmentation.
- EU “point of presence” vis a vis international initiatives.

by rules requiring national returns, which poses a challenge for transnational partnerships. Several participants underlined that co-funded partnerships have historically helped overcome these constraints and fostered a genuinely European approach; losing this mechanism risks re-nationalisation and fragmentation.

- **Private-sector funding** was discussed with caution. While it may be a realistic option for partnerships operating close to the market, many participants stressed that private actors are generally unwilling to fund fundamental research, standardisation activities, or work that benefits competitors. As a result, private funding alone was not considered a viable substitute for public funding in most cases, but rather a complementary source within hybrid financing models.

Challenges and Potential Solutions

Beyond funding, participants identified a set of systemic challenges that complicate the development of credible and meaningful phasing-out strategies. The most prominent challenge concerns **uncertainty**.

Ongoing negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework, FP10, and new instruments such as the European Competitiveness Fund create a moving target for strategic planning. Without clearer signals on future policy priorities, instruments, and governance models, partnerships struggle to define realistic scenarios and timelines.

Timing was repeatedly highlighted as a critical issue. Several partnerships are either newly launched or still scaling up their activities, while others extend well beyond the current Framework Programme. For these partnerships, developing phasing-out strategies is not only conceptually difficult but also resource-intensive, diverting attention and capacity from implementing and maximising the impact of existing work programmes.

The **diversity of partnerships** further complicates the picture. Some partnerships are mission-oriented and time-bound by design, making eventual discontinuation more conceivable. Others address long-term societal or technological challenges, such as health, climate, or digital infrastructure, where a clear end point is harder to define. Participants questioned whether a uniform expectation to phase out is appropriate for such structurally embedded policy areas.

Governance and central management models emerged as another major challenge. While more centralised approaches could offer harmonised rules and improved monitoring, they also raise unresolved questions regarding the role of Member States, the use of national funds, and the balance between excellence-based evaluation and expectations of national return. In this context, participants also raised existential questions: if funding and governance structures disappear, can a partnership still meaningfully exist?

Potential solutions discussed during the workshop focused less on definitive answers and more on approaches to manage uncertainty. **Participants emphasised the importance of clearly**



identifying which activities are essential to preserve, which could be scaled down, and which might be discontinued under different scenarios. Making gains and losses explicit was seen as a prerequisite for informed decision-making. Structural changes, including the creation of legal entities, were recognised as possible enablers of alternative funding, but also as sources of additional legal, administrative, and operational burdens that need careful consideration.

Open Issues and Strategic Uncertainties

Despite extensive exchanges, the workshop made clear that several fundamental issues remain open. One of the most prominent concerns relates to the **strategic intent behind the phasing-out requirement** itself. Participants questioned whether the exercise is primarily a planning tool to enhance sustainability, or whether it implicitly serves as a filtering mechanism for the future Framework Programme portfolio.

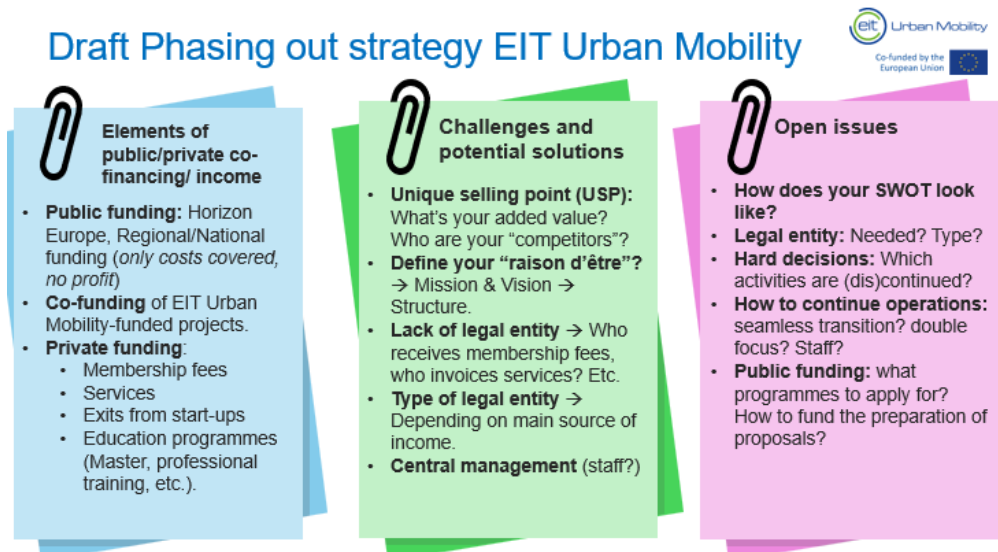
Uncertainty also persists regarding the **future role** of the European Commission. In scenarios without Framework Programme funding, it remains unclear what level of strategic steering, coordination, or oversight the Commission intends to maintain, particularly if other EU funding sources remain involved.

The **balance between public and private responsibility** for funding research and innovation was another unresolved issue. Many participants found it difficult to reconcile the idea of withdrawing

public funding from areas considered strategically important with the reality that private actors are unlikely to assume the associated risks. This tension was seen as particularly acute for fundamental research and pre-competitive activities.

Finally, concerns were raised about **equity and inclusiveness**. Increased reliance on membership fees, national funding, or private contributions risks marginalising smaller countries and organisations, potentially undermining the inclusiveness and European added value achieved through existing partnership models.

At the same time, the discussions highlighted that European Partnerships play a systemic role that extends beyond the interests of individual initiatives. Many of the challenges raised directly relate to the broader functioning of the European Research Area (ERA). Even though ERA was not explicitly used as a primary framing concept during the workshop, participants consistently emphasised the **added value of partnerships in aligning actors across borders**, overcoming national constraints, and sustaining coordinated European research and innovation efforts. From



this perspective, **phasing-out strategies** should be **assessed** not only in terms of partnership-level **sustainability**, but also in terms of their **contribution to maintaining ERA** coherence, integration, and **long-term research capacity** beyond the current Framework Programme.

To ensure that Europe's partnership landscape remains coherent, resilient, and capable of delivering long-term impact beyond the current Framework Programme, iterative refinement of phasing-out strategies, and continued dialogue between Member States, and the European Commission will be essential.

To conclude, the workshop underscored that phasing-out strategies should be understood as a strategic transition exercise rather than a purely administrative obligation. While partnerships are willing to engage constructively with this requirement, their ability to do so meaningfully depends on clearer guidance regarding future policy priorities, funding instruments, and governance models. Continued uncertainty surrounding the Multiannual Financial Framework, FP10 portfolios, and central management arrangements makes long-term planning difficult and risks turning phasing-out strategies into largely hypothetical exercises.

Nevertheless, it must be reminded that, as noted in the EC guidelines, this process is not merely a compliance step, but a critical forward-looking exercise to define how the partnership can transition beyond FP funding, capitalising on the momentum, knowledge, and collaboration built over time. Preparing the strategies gives an opportunity to articulate and communicate a clear and strategic vision on the future role and evolution, and the strategies should be regarded as living documents, which may be regularly reviewed and updated to take into account the progress made, maturation of the reflections and evolution of the policy context.

4. Building a coherent and strategic portfolio of European Partnerships

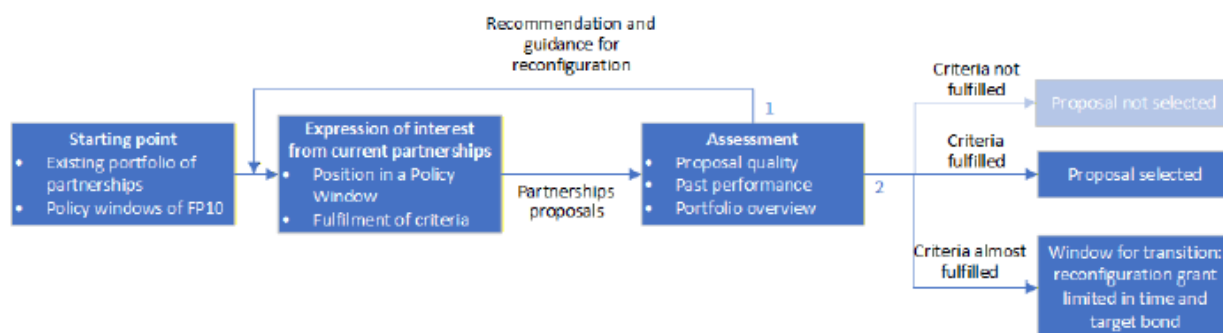
The afternoon panel discussion was dedicated on how to configure and evolve a coherent portfolio of European partnerships in FP10 without losing what has been built over years of collaboration. The newly set up (September 2025) Commission Expert Group on the Design and Selection of Directional Initiatives made an opening presentation drawing on their work thus far. The presenters³ framed the current landscape as improved but still complex, with the number of partnerships reduced over the last period, are yet still marked by different types and different implementation rules, which makes the overall picture hard to steer and hard to explain. Their mandate is described in three connected tasks, namely, to develop a thematically neutral method for identifying where a partnership is needed, to develop a method for configuring a portfolio of partnerships, and to turn these methods into a repeatable process with steps that can be applied over time. The tone was explicitly provisional and iterative. As noted, the Expert Group's thinking is more of a stress test, emphasising that they are not decision makers, that options will be consulted with the community, and that their role is to provide input that the Commission can then discuss with stakeholders.

A key contribution of the presentation was that the Expert Group treated portfolio building as a change management process rather than a one-off design exercise. This leads directly to the idea that portfolio change has dimensions such as speed, timeframe, scope, scale, and process, and that the real question is not only the end state but also how to move towards a new image that stakeholders can rally around. An important clarification was made early, namely that the exercise is framed as restructuring rather than downsizing, meaning doing things more efficiently rather than cutting for its own sake.

Within that change framing, the Expert Group proposed three high level scenarios that differ mainly in how much they are bottom up versus top down, or how quickly change is expected to happen. The first scenario, described as **Organic Reconfiguration**, is incremental and evolutionary. It begins from the existing structures, applies a strong bottom-up approach empowering self-organization around policy priorities, relies on incentives and shared images to encourage convergence, and expects continuous adaptation over time. The upside is comfort and inclusiveness, but it also has the risk of insufficient steering, fragmentation, and a multi speed pathway where some parts consolidate faster than others, alongside the danger that momentum is lost before a clearer configuration is reached.

³ Emily Wise, Chair of the Commission Expert Group on Directional Initiatives, and Michael Dooms, Member of the Commission Expert Group on Directional Initiatives

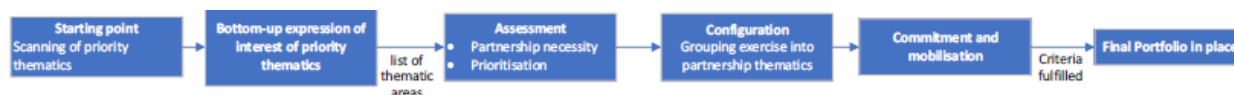
Figure 1: Scenario 1 – Organic Reconfiguration – illustrative process



Source: Emily Wise and Michael Dooms – presentation

The second scenario, **Phased Transition**, is a hybrid that combines bottom-up engagement with top-down steering to ensure focused alignment with EU policy priorities. It balances stakeholder engagement with strategic direction and is bound by clearer guidance on partnership formation. This scenario is described as more time bound than organic reconfiguration but is still stakeholder intensive and potentially resource heavy in terms of governance and implementation. It also implies increased push for mergers and adaptations (stronger pressure on existing partnerships), more strict policy frames and specific criteria for partnership formation, and similar to the first scenario, bears the risk of uneven progress and potential fragmentation of the portfolio.

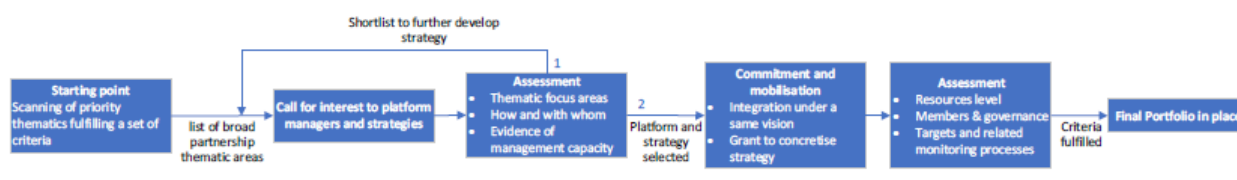
Figure 2: Scenario 2 – Phased Transition – illustrative process



Source: Emily Wise and Michael Dooms – presentation

The third scenario, **Comprehensive Transformation**, is the most disruptive and top down. The scenario builds on a thorough process of scanning to identify thematic areas (and sub-themes) and a highly managed portfolio configuration process where adjusted governance structures may be needed. It imagines starting from scratch, requiring all initiatives to reapply into a newly configured set of partnership areas, moving quickly toward a sleeker stable portfolio that is then maintained over the long term with adaptation happening within partnership structures rather than through constant creation and deletion of partnerships. This scenario features a directed process of transformation with a clear objective/end state, direct alignment of partnerships with EU policy priorities, and a rapidly achieved coherent portfolio configuration, with a limited/more easily manageable set of partnerships. Yet such a disruptive shift risks exclusion of some stakeholders and it demands high performance leadership/governance, and dynamic coordination of broad areas and stakeholder groups to avoid reproducing a larger version of today's complexity.

Figure 3: Scenario 3 – Comprehensive Transformation – illustrative process



Source: Emily Wise and Michael Dooms – presentation

The discussion that followed raised some important points that also need to be considered in the work of the Expert Group. When asked **what matters most in a portfolio configuration** or change process, participants stressed the need to cover the **whole value chain** to avoid leaving gaps that might later undermine impact. The portfolio redesign should be built on the accumulated experience of partners, industry, and member states, suggesting that learning from two decades of practice is itself a structural feature of a credible change process. As noted by a participant even under radical change, it is crucial to **capture learnings systematically** rather than discarding them in the name of renewal. A further practical characteristic emerged through the impact discussion. It was argued that **impact goals must be extremely clear**, not only in terms of desired outcomes but also in terms of what it takes to get there, including skills, resources, and mandates for activities like market shaping. Adding to this remark, the market uptake was considered to be dependent on regulation, infrastructure, and incentives, so portfolio design cannot rely on **cooperation with industry** alone but must **connect with regulators, finance, and civil society** to make markets “*hot*” enough for innovation to be pulled through.

“..if the market is cold and the regulations are against us, there are no incentives maybe to compete with fossil fuels, or there isn't the infrastructure there to make it possible for the new innovation to get in there. It doesn't matter how good the innovation is, it doesn't matter how much we cooperate with the industry if the market isn't there.” (comment from the audience)

The discussion also addressed the **premises of the portfolio approach** and here the Expert Group offered a starting set that included strengthening European competitiveness, pooling resources that single member states cannot achieve alone, stronger cooperation with industry to accelerate innovation and scaling, strategic robustness built on long term, sustainable structures, and maintaining flexibility and agility over time. The audience reactions revealed a **productive tension around the position of competitiveness**. One view centred competitiveness in the policy agenda with all other premises behind it, while another argued that partnerships are also about environmental quality and the green transition, and societal impact, and since priorities move, flexibility and agility become essential.

“It's very important to have something that is not too big and difficult for the governance and that is able to adapt also to the authority and to keep in mind that it's not only competitiveness, but it's also .. the human and .. the environment.” (comment from the audience)

A further intervention introduced **critical mass** as a missing premise, suggesting it should not just be a selection criterion but part of the portfolio vision because it links directly to relevance and the

capacity to tackle societal challenges. Industry voices underlined **cooperation with industry**, yet they framed it in terms of impact rather than representation, arguing that without facilitated industry cooperation the portfolio would struggle to deliver the intended impact.

Regarding the **main goal of the portfolio configuration** and change process, various views emerged including **prosperity**, as it was argued that competitiveness without prosperity will fail even for industry, as well as securing competitiveness of European industries in the sense of **securing jobs and wealth** in Europe.

In the panel discussion⁴ that followed, the **EIC** shared their experience about selecting potential innovations to enter their portfolio. The EIC sees itself as “bringing research to the market” and creating and scaling start-ups and scale-ups, and the portfolio logic is built around that aim. A central selection mechanism is the use of **programme managers**, who are field experts with the core task to identify areas where Europe can become a future leader, especially where research could open disruptive breakthroughs and create new markets. Portfolio entry is then structured through the annual EIC work programme, which deliberately mixes bottom-up openness with top-down directionality: roughly half of the funding is for bottom up activities and can address any topic, while the other half is channelled through challenge topics developed by the programme managers. Programme managers do proactive management and “select a portfolio of projects” that respond to the challenge, choosing the best ones in a way that makes them complementary and able to work together on issues like missing regulation, lack of IP strategy, and other translation to market challenges. They also connect portfolios to relevant policy and legislative conversations so that portfolio learning can feed into enabling conditions.

In sharing his view about the way towards FP10 for partnerships, the Partnership Knowledge Hub (PKH) Member State Co-chair sharpened the message of the PKH Opinion that was published last year, by emphasising the importance of trust and the time needed to establish it. As he put it, this is not a soft add on but a condition for partnerships to function smoothly. He also offered a strong reframing of the baseline:

“...We managed, during this framework program to pull together some 50 to €60 billion on joint programming. That's fantastic...yes, we need to further develop this, but the starting point should not be, at least in my opinion, to say we have a problem with this partnership, but to say, wow, what a fantastic achievement.” (Alexander Grablowitz, Co-Chair of the PKH)

Another point noted was that renewal should be enabled through **differentiated support** rather than through a single blunt instrument, calling also for more flexible co-funding rates, for identifying what existing networks need “at a minimum” to remain functional, and then adding political priorities on top in a way that keeps joining forces attractive while still maintaining the established networks.

⁴ The panel members were Emily Wise, Chair of the Commission Expert Group on Directional Initiatives, Michael Dooms, Member of the Commission Expert Group on Directional Initiatives, Alexander Grablowitz, Co-Chair of the Partnership Knowledge Hub, Anne-Marie Sassen, Head of Unit, Executive Agency, EISMEA.

Striking the right **balance between continuity and renewal** is important but also challenging. The point was made that the **core asset of partnerships is the built up “soft infrastructure”**, meaning social capital, mutual understanding, and trust, and that reform does not need to be experienced as a threat if it acknowledges this infrastructure and makes use of the legacy in a renewed form. Another view linked renewal to **organisational efficiencies**, to learning across partnerships, and even to consolidation as a way to strengthen speed and quality within fixed budgets.

The speakers' descriptions of an **ideal portfolio** converged around a portfolio that is **strategically clearer, more impact oriented, and more attractive to applicants, while still remaining flexible enough to adapt**. A common thread that also emerged was that partnerships should do more than project funding and programming, pushing further toward market uptake, and knowledge transfer. In this regard, the importance of collaboration with industry as a main premise was repeated at this point.

“..one of the main premises should be then stronger cooperation with industry to accelerate innovation and market launch and scaling because I think that is a really important role. And then I hope we can find, strong collaboration and also with the start ups and scale ups in the EIC or others who are not funded through other mechanisms, to really, innovate together with the large corporates.” (comment from the audience)

A shared concern was that the more complex and consolidated the structure becomes, the harder it will be for applicants and beneficiaries to access it, so an ideal portfolio must remain attractive and legible not only to top tier organisations but also to ordinary researchers and smaller companies. The “modular” idea offers a way to reconcile these aims: partnerships can be the collaborative infrastructure that mobilises communities, while modules of action can be funded through different programmes and can include short lived challenges as well as longer term directional work, provided the portfolio has the strategic capacity to renew priorities more frequently than a single programming cycle.

To conclude, the change management and the scenario approach of the portfolio work by the Expert Group were well received by the partnership community, who added important insights to the thinking. The **most important characteristics** of a portfolio configuration or change process should include an iterative and consultative pathway involving all stakeholders (EC, member states, partnerships, private sector, etc.), a clear articulation of the desired impact logic and the enabling capacities required to reach it, and a design principle that the portfolio must cover the relevant value chain and actor ecosystem so that impact pathways do not break at missing links. The process was repeatedly characterised as needing the right governance choreography, while also being portrayed as a learning process, where the ability to harvest lessons from existing partnerships is treated as a condition for credible renewal, whether change is incremental or disruptive. The **strongest premise** is not a single item isolated from the rest, but the ability to hold competitiveness, societal goals, and adaptability inside one coherent strategic logic. The **main goal to achieve** in the portfolio configuration and change process should be to produce a portfolio that is strategically clearer and more effective at delivering prosperity and competitiveness through demonstrable impact pathways, while preserving and redeploying the

accumulated know how, trust, and coordination capacity embedded in existing partnerships. The design should treat continuity as the preservation and reuse of collaborative capacity, while renewal is seen as a structured, supported transition. This is consistent with the Partnership Knowledge Hub emphasis on minimum support to maintain networks and with the call to avoid letting trust fade away even if structures are reshaped. It is also consistent with the argument that directionality should not be updated only once per programming period, because that time block is “far too long”, implying the need for cyclical renewal within continuity.

European Partnership Stakeholder Forum 2025

“Re- Imagining partnerships: the road to FP10”

3 December 2025, 09:30-19:00

Location: Square, Coudenberg 3, 1000 Brussels (<https://square-brussels.com>)

Draft Agenda

09:30 – 10:30

Registration and welcome coffee

10:30 – 11:00

Welcome address and High-level keynote speeches

- Marc Lemaitre Director-General of DG RTD

11:00 – 12:30

Panel 1: “*Shaping Collaboration: European Partnerships under FP10*”

Presentation of the Commission’s Proposal for Horizon Europe (FP10) by the Director from DG RTD, DIR G, Pauline Rouch. Followed by a panel discussion on European Partnerships under the new Horizon Europe.

Panel members:

- Pauline Rouch, European Commission, Director of DG RTD, DIR G
- Alexandre Affre, Deputy Director-General, BusinessEurope
- Lucie Nunez, Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Director of the Department of R&D
- Benedicte Løseth, Research Council of Norway, Executive Director - Research System and Internationalisation
- Piri Lindholm, Director at the European Regions Research & Innovation network (ERRIN)

12:30 – 14:00

Networking lunch and bilateral talks

14:00 – 15:30

Parallel workshops

A1

Assessing and demonstrating the impact of European Partnerships

A2

Raising the potential for synergies and cooperation within clusters, across partnership and beyond

A3

Innovation and market uptake

A4

Phasing out strategies

15:30 – 16:15

Networking coffee

16:15 – 17:30

Panel 2: *“Building a coherent and strategic portfolio of European Partnerships”*

Presentation by the new Commission Expert Group on Directional Initiatives, introducing an array of proposed options they developed for identifying thematic areas to be addressed through partnerships, defining the optimal configuration of the overall portfolio, and outlining the steps and sequencing of the partnership selection and portfolio-building process. The presentation will be followed by a Q&A with the audience and a panel discussion.

Panel members:

- Emily Wise, Chair of the Commission Expert Group on Directional Initiatives
- Michael Doods, member of the Commission Expert Group on Directional Initiatives
- Alexander Grablowitz, Co-Chair of the Partnership Knowledge Hub
- Anne-Marie Sassen, Head of Unit, Executive Agency, EISMEA.01

17:30 – 19:00

Networking dinner and bilateral talks

Parallel sessions 3. Dec 2025, 14:00 – 15:30

The parallel sessions (workshops) of European Partnership Stakeholder Forum 2025 are organised across Clusters and formats of Partnerships of Horizon Europe. The topics of the parallel sessions were defined beforehand together with the Partnership community.

Session A1: Assessing and demonstrating the impact of European Partnerships

Background

Under the Horizon Europe framework, partnerships have adopted a more **strategic, impact-oriented approach** that aims to improve their coherence among themselves and in their interactions with other instruments in the Framework Programme. In addition to contributions along the Horizon Europe Key Impact Pathways, partnerships have also developed unique **partnership-specific impact pathways** to tackle demands of their thematic domains, innovation ecosystems and value chains, along with tailored indicators, methods and monitoring arrangements.

Identifying and measuring the **diverse impacts of partnerships** (going beyond publications and patents) is essential to establish their added value and systemic impact on the EU R&I systems and ecosystems, as well as the contribution to addressing broader societal, economic and environmental challenges. Capturing those types of impact remains a major challenge, requiring methods and indicators that allow for assessing both tangible and less direct, intangible impacts that may manifest only over time. The session, therefore, invites shared exploration on how to approach, assess and demonstrate the multifaceted impacts of the European Partnerships.

Session goals

The aim of the workshop will be to:

- **Discuss unique impact pathways and specific approaches to impact assessment** that have been applied by partnerships in their respective domains.
- **Showcase the wide range of impacts** that the partnerships can generate, spanning the policy, economic, environmental and social realms.
- **Identify ‘recipes’ for impact creation** in highly dynamic and demanding contexts: the necessary factors and ingredients that any such journey should have.

The session will feature a panel discussion among representatives of European Partnerships across different clusters. They will share their stories of impact, challenges they have overcome on the road to impact, and recipes for capturing and assessing the diversity of impacts.

Session A2: *Raising the potential for synergies and cooperation within clusters, across partnerships and beyond*

Background

Collaboration across European Partnerships plays an increasingly important role in **improving efficiency, strengthening coherence**, and enhancing the strategic reach of activities under Horizon Europe. At the last Partnership Stakeholder Forum, participants also explicitly requested a deeper exchange on how **synergies can be advanced in practice**.

Although many partnerships already engage in joint activities, several structural and operational challenges continue to limit the full exploitation of synergies. Among others, these could include the **diversity of instruments and funding modalities, differences in governance structures**, the lack of systematic mechanisms to facilitate **collaboration across clusters or beyond formal partnership frameworks or even insufficient systematic knowledge on common topics of synergetic potential**. Understanding these challenges is essential not only for improving the coordination of partnership activities, but also for strengthening the contribution of the partnership ecosystem to the broader European R&I landscape. Effective synergies can reduce duplication and create complementarities, support alignment with policy priorities. Together we want to co-create solutions that help to make better use of existing and potential synergies.

Session goals

The aim of this session is to:

- **Share experiences**, including good practices and common challenges that affect cooperation and the development of synergies.
- **Jointly develop approaches and solutions** to address the challenges identified in areas such as instruments, collaboration topics, governance arrangements, cross-partnership cooperation and synergies beyond partnership boundaries.

Expected Outcomes

- **A set of approaches to better use existing and potential synergies** that partnerships can integrate into their own processes to strengthen collaboration.
- **Strengthened connections and mutual awareness** among partnerships across clusters, helping to build a foundation for future cooperation.
- **Insights for the European Commission and ERA-LEARN** on how to further support partnerships in enhancing synergies, including suggestions for improved guidance, facilitation mechanisms and support services.

Session A3: *Innovation and market uptake*

Background and goals:

Stakeholders across the European Union struggle to translate research into innovation and market outcomes. European Partnerships could play a key role in bridging the innovation gap and turning scientific knowledge into practical solutions. The European Commission has recently published the report “[Scaling up ideas](#)”, which includes an analysis of technology readiness levels (TRL) and technology progression in Horizon Europe projects. Regarding European Partnerships, the report contains data on Joint Undertakings and co-programmed European Partnerships. According to the analysis, most projects funded by Joint Undertakings are concentrated in the range of TRL4 to TRL6, representing 68% of all EU contributions in the JUs. 29% is allocated to projects at TRL7 and above. In co-programmed European Partnerships, TRL5 to TRL7 represent 86% of all EU funding, while TRL8 and TRL9 combined account for 10%. The report provides no data on co-funded European Partnerships.

The goal of this session is an interactive exchange on experiences and challenges for research-driven innovation by sharing lessons learnt and good practices, addressing for example:

- Engaging industry
- Bringing results to the market
- Contributing to the development of standards
- Providing value for society

Expected outcomes:

- Participants gain insights and inspirations to improve their own strategies for innovation and market uptake
- Ideas and needs for future support activities are collected which could be organized by ERA-LEARN / EC

The session will feature short good-practice presentations and a panel session followed by questions from the audience and a plenary discussion.

Session A4: *Phasing out strategies*

Background and goals

This session is co-organised by ERA-LEARN and the EIT and planned as a cross-partnership workshop to work on phasing-out and sustainability strategies across different European Partnership formats. Building on insights from previous workshops, the session aims to facilitate peer learning and structured exchange among partnerships facing similar transition challenges towards the post-Horizon Europe landscape. Specifically, the session intends to:

- Deepen the **understanding of the goals, processes and timing** for developing phasing-out strategies in different partnership contexts (Co-funded, Co-programmed, Institutionalised (all formats) bearing in mind the deadline of the first draft for feedback 15 December 2025).
- Identify **common success factors and challenges** in ensuring sustainability beyond EU framework funding.
- Explore **diverse income/ co-financing generation models** (public, private, hybrid) and their applicability across partnership types.
- Provide a space for **experience sharing and co-creation** of preliminary ideas feeding into future sustainability actions and the 2026 Financial Sustainability Workshop.
- Strengthen the **cross-partnership dialogue** to build a more coherent strategy for sustainability.

Expected outcomes

- Improved understanding of how different partnership models can approach phasing-out in a structured, sustainable and impact-oriented manner.
- Identification of concrete building blocks for future sustainability frameworks, including governance, financial and policy dimensions.
- Collection of key challenges and actionable ideas to be further discussed in the upcoming 2026 EIT/ ERA-LEARN Phasing out/ Financial Sustainability Workshop.
- Enhanced cross-partnership awareness of synergies and complementary approaches.

Note:

All materials from the COM workshop on phasing-out strategies (25.09.2025) are available on: [Workshop on Phasing-out Strategies — ERA-LEARN](#), including the recording of the workshop, the summary report, the ppt-presentations, the FAQ document

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Imprint

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