

# First Thematic Partnership Workshop

**Brussels, 15-16 May 2019**

Improve coherence of partnerships in  
thematic research areas

**30/05/2019**

# Information

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# 1. Introduction

The workshop was the first one of a series of thematic workshops to be organised by ERA-LEARN. The aims of the particular one were to:

- validate the Reports on the thematic coverage of current partnership in relation to the Clusters under Horizon Europe, prepared by ERA-LEARN and presented in the parallel sessions of the workshop.
- prepare existing partnerships for Horizon Europe (e.g. contribution of partnerships to the clusters' intervention areas; rationalisation, restructuring and reform of partnerships)
- connect networks thematically (e.g. visibility of partnerships in main research areas; improve synergies of partnerships)
- foster cooperation between all types of partnerships (P2P, PPP, EIT-KICs, FET-Flagships); define useful activities with relevant stakeholders

The target group included:

- Partnership representatives of P2Ps, PPPs plus EIT-KICs and FET Flagships;
- 100 participants registered to participation leading to a representation of around 60% of existing networks/partnerships

The structure of the workshop consisted of plenary presentations and parallel sessions where discussions were guided by a set of questions. Results were reported back to plenary on the second day of the workshop. This report summarises the main results of these discussions. The agenda of the event as well as the questions that guided the discussions in the parallel sessions are annexed to the report. The presentations of the workshop are available at <https://www.era-learn.eu/news-events/events/era-learn-thematic-partnership-workshop-towards-horizon-europe>.

The Reports on the Positioning of current Partnerships in relation to the Horizon Europe Clusters will be revised following the outcomes of the workshop and will be made available at <https://www.era-learn.eu/partnerships-in-a-nutshell/r-i-partnerships/transition-to-horizon-europe/era-learn-thematic-analysis-of-current-initiatives>.

## 2. Results of the discussions

### 2.1. Cross-cutting results

#### **Feedback to the reports on the Positioning of current Partnerships in relation to the Horizon Europe Clusters**

There was unanimous agreement that the reports on the Positioning of current Partnerships in relation to the Horizon Europe Clusters were a good start of representing the status quo but were missing information about already existing collaborative links among partnerships. Examples include for instance alignment of roadmaps, Memorandum of Understanding, joint training, exchanges, joint dissemination, etc. apart from joint calls. The partnerships promised to send this information to be integrated in the revised versions of the reports to be soon uploaded on the ERA-LEARN website.

#### **Purpose of the Reports and the thematic workshop**

Overall, the opportunity to meet and establish contacts with other networks and especially across the boundaries of P2Ps and PPPs was much appreciated by the majority of the networks who admitted they indeed made new contacts that they intended to follow-up and build upon.

The audience wondered about the purpose of the Reports especially in the middle of the running consultation launched by the EC about the new 44 new partnerships suggested for Horizon Europe. It was clarified that this workshop cannot intervene in the 'official' consultation process addressed to the Member States with the possibility to provide feedback to the Commission by 28<sup>th</sup> May. Instead, it should be seen as an opportunity to discuss with other networks in order to formulate concrete steps to organize/advance their collaborations. This would also allow drawing lessons for the future generation of European Partnerships under Horizon Europe, where coherence and collaboration among partnerships and with the activities of Horizon Europe will be key. In this regard the presence of P2Ps as well as non-P2P networks (PPPs, EIT-KICs and FET Flagships) was much appreciated. The outcomes of the workshop discussions should be an important input at the operational level that could be fed back to the Ministries by the networks themselves to help them make informed decisions about how to respond to the on-going consultation.

#### **Main achievements and challenges of collaboration**

In reflecting upon their achievements the networks appreciated the building of trust over the years as well as the fact that sustainable collaboration has been built which goes much beyond

organising joint calls. Apart from the financing of cross-border research projects participants appreciated the interaction and exchange of national programmes in areas where there has been no such exchange before. At the same time they noted how challenging it is to build long-term collaboration.

Nevertheless, it is legitimate to explore the level that synergies can be built across networks as not all networks are interdisciplinary in nature or not all networks present opportunities for thematic overlap or proximity and thus collaboration. But the need exists to look into how the current situation can be improved not only within but also across the different clusters.

### Reflections on the new partnership approach and future steps

The new partnership proposal raised several concerns about the sustainability of existing partnerships and of splitting up again research communities and actors that have established long-term collaboration after significant efforts and investments. Yet, the need for a shift from an instrument driven approach to a more purpose driven approach was acknowledged. At the same time, networks repeated the importance of ensuring political commitment (including budget commitments) that has always been a challenge and of receiving support from the EC in managing / joining networks. In this respect the possibility to receive support for existing or new networks under the ERA part of Horizon Europe was seen as a good opportunity to continue and expand activities.

In relation to the future the networks in all thematic sessions considered it important to create 'spaces' to come together (networking events, regular meetings) and to reach across sectors and areas (cross-sectoral, cross-ministerial, cross-disciplinary). The support from the Commission is important in this regard in providing data and analysis but also in facilitating data exchange and even in creating a more permanent structure for this purpose.

The additional points made by the thematic groups are presented in the following sub-sections

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## 2.2. Cluster 'Digital and Industry'

Apart from the fact that connections were missing, the thematic group on 'Digital and Industry' noted that the network analysis graph in the respective Cluster Report was misleading and that for clarity purposes the different types of cooperation should be defined.

In terms of future activities to improve cooperation and coherence, the group highlighted the need to find complementarities and look across the different types of partnerships. Certain partnerships in this cluster will continue their alignment work for their roadmaps, while they are also interested in exploring connections across instruments along certain paths such as the TRL scale for instance. They will also continue their work on organising joint calls across different areas and further their activities in training / education and joint dissemination.

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### *2.3. Cluster ‘Energy, Climate and Mobility’*

In terms of challenges to collaboration, the thematic group on ‘energy, climate and mobility’ highlighted the difficulty to create effective linkages with industry and the policy world. At the same time, they stressed the value of personal contacts that were enabled by the partnerships which led to improved performance of the members due to the exchange of best practices, experience and trust that was established over the years.

When looking into future steps the group was interested in the facilitation of informal networking via special events for instance with the support of the EC, as well as the uptake of certain activities such as joint calls between different partnerships on a case by case basis, or of activities for monitoring and ensuring impact.

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### *2.4. Cluster ‘Health’*

The ‘health’ group highlighted that while cooperation is positive in principle it is quite challenging to cooperate with different partners from different backgrounds. Experience has also shown that certain activities such as sharing and joint management of data beyond network boundaries is also difficult. Notwithstanding the difficulties and challenges though, collaboration can be facilitated by improved communication of success stories/ achievements to different stakeholders including civil society.

Challenges of the new approach to future partnerships refer to the loss of visibility of longtime successful partnerships. This will lead to significant investments and trust building efforts being wasted. While the roles for the new partnerships are not clear yet it is important to go for smart cooperation, i.e. identify effective interactions given the limited resources available.

In thinking about future activities to improve cooperation and coherence, the networks in this cluster noted it would be good to provide feedback to ERA-LEARN on topics for future workshops. At the same time, it is important to explore the possibilities for meetings among the different partnership secretariats and for data sharing and exchange.

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### *2.5. Cluster ‘Food and Natural Resources’*

The thematic group on ‘food and natural resources’ confirmed that they would continue and expand their collaboration on development of joint visions and agendas, cross-sectoral inter-ministerial cooperation and building trust. They intend to apply a co-creation approach considering existing networks, stakeholders and partnerships for making better use of existing knowledge. In this regard they highlighted the importance of forming networking ‘arenas’ to

facilitate regular meetings at cluster level to identify synergies and define core-areas of common interests. Governance models also need to be extended to include public and private actors.

In increasing coherence, the thematic group highlighted the importance of re-designing partnerships in an inclusive manner engaging end-users, policy-makers, NGOs etc. Activities such as mapping/identification of stakeholders engagement are important in this regard while new structures may be needed to facilitate the process building upon effective existing structures. Whereas formal co-operation agreements are desirable as an output, flexibility is also needed as well as experience concerning operationalisation of flexible and fit-for-purpose tools. Specifically the EIT-KICs represented were interested in a valorisation process that would enable scaling-up between partnerships, incorporating entrepreneurship.

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## 2.6. Cluster *'Inclusive and Secure Societies'*

The networks represented in the 'Inclusive and Secure Societies' group confirmed their interest to continue delivering on EU objectives which cannot be met by EU programmes alone. Society needs partnerships addressing the human factor in the research areas covered by the networks. These need to be included in the present provisional list of partnerships for Horizon Europe.

In terms of future cooperation to improve coherence it was noted that the wide range of actual and potential connection between several networks in the cluster and the wide range of networks (JPIs, Cofunds, infrastructures) shows that there is a need for further discussion. In this regard they repeated the need for additional workshops to be organised. Overall, it was highlighted there is a lot of potential in the networks in humanities and social sciences for collaborating on the identification of the areas where human factor aspects are integrated in other clusters and partnerships.

### 3. Annex: Agenda of the workshop and guiding questions of the parallel sessions

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**when**

Wednesday, 15 May 2019

12.30 – 18.00

Thursday, 16 May 2019

09.00 – 12.30

**where**

Square – Brussels Convention Center

Rue Ravensteinstraat 2

B-1000 Brussels

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**15 May 2019*****Preparing for partnerships under Horizon Europe (day 1)***

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**12:30 – 13:30****Light lunch**

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**13:30 – 15:00****Plenary****Plenary session: Welcome and introduction****(Moderator: Ken Guy, Wise Guys)**

- Welcome (Roland Brandenburg, ERA-LEARN)
- Horizon Europe and its new policy approach to partnerships. Increasing coherence and collaboration. (Jörg Niehoff, EC)
- Questions and answers
- Rationale and background of thematic "discussion papers" (Michael Dinges, ERA-LEARN)

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**15.00 – 16.00****4 rooms****(Moderated group discussions)****Theme-specific parallel sessions: Discussion papers****(Moderators and rapporteurs: ERA-LEARN)**

- Presentation of theme-specific "discussion papers"
  - Health
  - Digital/Industry
  - Energy/Climate
  - Food
- Discussion and feedback on thematic "discussion papers"

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**16.00 – 16:30****Coffee break**

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16.30 – 18.00  
4 rooms  
(Moderated group discussions):

**Theme-specific parallel sessions: Improve coherence of partnerships**

(Moderators and rapporteurs: ERA-LEARN)

Interactive discussion:

- Exchange of experiences on cooperation between the partnerships in H2020
- Preparation for partnership role in Horizon Europe (European partnership initiatives, clusters and intervention areas)
- Summary (Rapporteur)

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18.00 – 20:30

Reception (buffet)

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**16 May 2019**

***Preparing for partnerships under Horizon Europe (day 2)***

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09.00 – 10.30

Plenary

**Plenary session: Improve coherence of partnerships**

(Moderator: Ken Guy, Wise Guys)

- Partnerships under Horizon Europe – Questions and answers to the Commission (Jörg Niehoff, EC)
- Example of partnership interactions
  - Daria Julkowska, European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases
- Discussion

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10.30

Coffee

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11.00 – 12.30

Plenary

**Plenary session: Results of parallel sessions**

(Moderator: Ken Guy, Wise Guys)

- Summary presentation of theme-specific sessions (Effie Amanatidou, ERA-LEARN)
- Discussion (Theme-specific moderators)
- Wrap up (Ken Guy)

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12.30

Sandwiches/ Farewell

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### *Theme specific parallel session 1: discussion papers*

The Cluster Reports that ERA-LEARN drafted were sent to all partnerships in advance of the workshop. The thematic parallel sessions started with a brief presentation of the main findings of the Cluster Reports. This was followed by a discussion on the following issues.

- Are there any important aspects missing in the report?
- What have been the main strengths and achievements of the existing partnership landscape?
- What have been the main challenges?

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### *Theme specific parallel sessions 2: improve coherence of partnerships*

The second part of the parallel session was extended to the future of partnerships. The lead questions for discussion included

- What kind of interactions did/do you have with other (P2P, PPP) networks and which are these networks?
- How did/does this contribute to achieving your partnership's objectives and/or improve performance?
- What are the challenges of the new partnership proposal?
- How could the cooperation between different types of partnerships be improved to support the reformation of the partnership landscape?
- How can your partnership contribute to increase coherence in the partnership landscape?
- Which actions need to be taken? By whom?



*Imprint*

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