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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Directorate G – Common Policy Centre
G.4 – Common Missions & Partnerships Service

Phasing out strategies Feedback workshop – online 11th Feb 2026

Summaries of the cluster discussions

Disclaimer: The content of this document summarises the discussions held at the workshop and does not necessarily reflect the official views or position of the European Commission.

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1. CLUSTER 1

Discussions

- It was confirmed that **the starting point of the phasing-out strategy** should, as a general principle, be considered around the end of the current Framework Programme funding. At the same time, partnerships may choose to initiate elements of their transition earlier if appropriate. This does not imply any early reduction or termination of existing FP funding.
- Phasing-out also can also entail **looking into other EU instruments or future calls**, which, however, are not yet designed – this poses a serious challenge: strategies need to project partnerships in a future financial landscape that is still vague and uncertain.
- In practice, the work of the partnerships has relied on substantial public budgets, but without FP funding it may be necessary to select only some elements or activities to continue and accept that certain instruments or activities will be discontinued, with an explicit expectation that activities cannot continue at the same level and that **downscaling or re-prioritisation is reasonable**.
- The strategy therefore needs to remain hypothesis-driven, treated as a **living document that can be revised** once assumptions are tested and the most credible scenario is validated.
- The **deadline to submit a revised version until 20 March is challenging** while earlier submissions had formal board approval, addressing some of the EC comments may take more time and/or make internal consultation more delicate.
- The suggestion to submit the revised versions to the EC without again being **endorsed by the Governing Board** raises concerns about the legal **consequences if either the EC or eventually Member States (in the case of public partners) do not approve** the final text.
- In some cases, Governing Board validation may not be secured in time until the 20 March, implying the **need for additional dialogue and space for board adoption**.

Opportunities for peer learning

- More generic sustainability models can be investigated where **tools and activities could be supported through competitive calls, combined with Member State contributions** to sustain the network, data generation, and core functions.
- Another possible route is by **establishing close collaboration with other partnerships** that can help progress towards higher TRL levels.

2. CLUSTER 4

Discussions

- Participants discussed the **availability of EU funding sources** beyond Framework Programme funding, noting that there is no official consolidated list and that partnerships are expected to identify relevant programmes depending on the activities envisaged in their scenarios.

- The **role of governance bodies** in adopting phasing-out strategies was debated, particularly in the context of Joint Undertakings. Concerns were raised that involving General Assemblies could create additional uncertainty or risk member disengagement.
- For co-programmed partnerships, the question of **financial transparency** was discussed. It was clarified that associations, as independent bodies, are not required to share detailed financial figures in this exercise, although illustrative examples or calculations may be provided voluntarily if considered helpful.
- It was mentioned that this was **a difficult exercise for the partnerships that were just starting or have not been launched yet**. They need to base some scenarios/parts of their phasing-out plans on assumptions. It was recommended to identify key components of the WPs and SRIAs and reflect on their continuation.
- Conflicting feedback received by some regarding **a scenario involving a new partnership**. It was clarified that a scenario that included just the continuation of the partnership without taking into account the changes in the FP10 proposal was not a viable scenario, as well as that a scenario on a **future partnership was not a no-FP funding scenario**. FP10 partnerships are **completely new**, not direct continuations. These scenarios must take into consideration the new partnership framework in the FP10 proposal.
- Representatives from co-programmed partnerships mentioned that the associations who are partners in the **co-programmed partnerships have a history of self-sustainability**. The majority of them have existed before the partnership and can just revert back to their previous funding models and activities. For the newer associations that were formed for the purpose of a partnership, this is more challenging.
- None of the participants mentioned collaborating on the strategies. However, there had been some discussions among the partnerships to get some **clarification and common understanding**.
- In general, the partnerships saw this as a difficult exercise because **they don't have an overview of the (future) funding opportunities**.

Opportunities for peer-learning

- Comparing **certain set-ups (e.g. EIT KICs)** to the partnerships was viewed as irrelevant or unhelpful. It was agreed that they are different, and it was not intended that the other partnerships should become like them, e.g. mandatorily strive for financial sustainability. This was just intended **as inspiration**, and participation in the EIT workshop on financial sustainability is entirely voluntary.

3. CLUSTER 5

Discussion

- Participants discussed how to envision **structural continuity** for partnerships, including whether continuation is possible without creating a new legal entity in cases where private-side associations are already financially sustainable.
- The potential transition towards **membership-based technology platforms** was explored, alongside reflections on industry's willingness to finance coordination and roadmap activities.

- For partnerships established specifically for the current programme period, the viability of continued collaboration without EU Framework Programme funding was debated, including considerations of maintaining sufficient critical mass and the possible link between future funding eligibility and the preservation of a formal legal structure.
- In scenarios of decreased funding, participants discussed **how to prioritise activities** and whether developing business plans to increase membership remains appropriate despite policy uncertainty.
- The realism of securing partner commitments within tight timelines was identified as a practical challenge.
- Diversifying funding sources while maintaining manageable and transparent internal governance structures was examined, including the importance of clearly distinguishing between funding origins and allocation mechanisms.
- The **appropriate level of detail in scenario planning** was discussed, including the balance between flexibility through multiple “if–then” pathways and the risk that excessive detail may become obsolete in a changing policy context.
- In public-public and tripartite models, participants reflected on how reduced funding and private-sector engagement could be addressed and on the future positioning of tripartite structures.
- Finally, the discussion explored how to reconcile research-focused (RDI-driven) stakeholders with innovation and deployment-oriented actors, and whether governance and funding mechanisms can be designed to accommodate both perspectives effectively.

Opportunities for peer learning

- **Possible structural models without FP funding:** transition to a membership-based technology platform, discontinuation with preserved building blocks, or hybrid models with diversified funding sources.
- Share approaches to preserving coordination mechanisms, roadmaps, and networking channels; **assess risks to membership and critical mass; discuss strategies to retain industry engagement and whether business plans for increased membership should be presented.**
- **Clarify how partnerships distinguish between funding sources and allocation of activities;** how to proportionally adjust activities if funding decreases; and how to manage governance alignment (boards, members) under tight timelines.

4. CLUSTER 6

Discussions

- Participants noted that **certain partnership approaches may be less attractive for mobilising industry funding** and reflected on possible ways to address this challenge. Interest was expressed in having greater visibility on funding opportunities outside the Framework Programme at EU level that may become available in the coming years.
- The discussion also focused on **how to prioritise elements to be maintained in phasing-out scenarios, with emphasis on safeguarding the partnership’s legacy**

beyond its formal lifetime. The importance of identifying the necessary actions to protect core assets and of viewing the partnership as an evolving vehicle that can build on and complement previous achievements was highlighted. The development of at least one credible scenario not relying on FP funding, for example through models such as living labs, was identified as a key objective.

- A complete **analysis of risks, including funding and resources**, can be performed for each scenario and a presentation of this analysis can be included in the strategies. This might also feed in the prioritization process regarding which activities are to be continued.

Opportunities for peer learning

- Have internal discussion and involve the stakeholders through **active thinking about the possible scenarios and their outcome** and integrate all the collected information into the draft to be delivered.
- Use of **National Mirror groups** and dialogues at Ministry levels.
- Pay **attention to the timing**, if the development of the scenario may benefit from back-to-back events where stakeholders can be gathered that would be beneficial.
- Important to get a **clear view on what is demanded by the EC and the timeline**, as well as the status of development of each partnership and the **tools available to be used**, not only FP10 but also networks to be accessed and funding opportunities beyond FP10 and how you can get support and synergies from them.