

Requirements for European Partnerships – how to address Partnerships criteria in practice?

Joerg Niehoff, DG Research and Innovation

Criteria for European Partnerships – where are they defined?

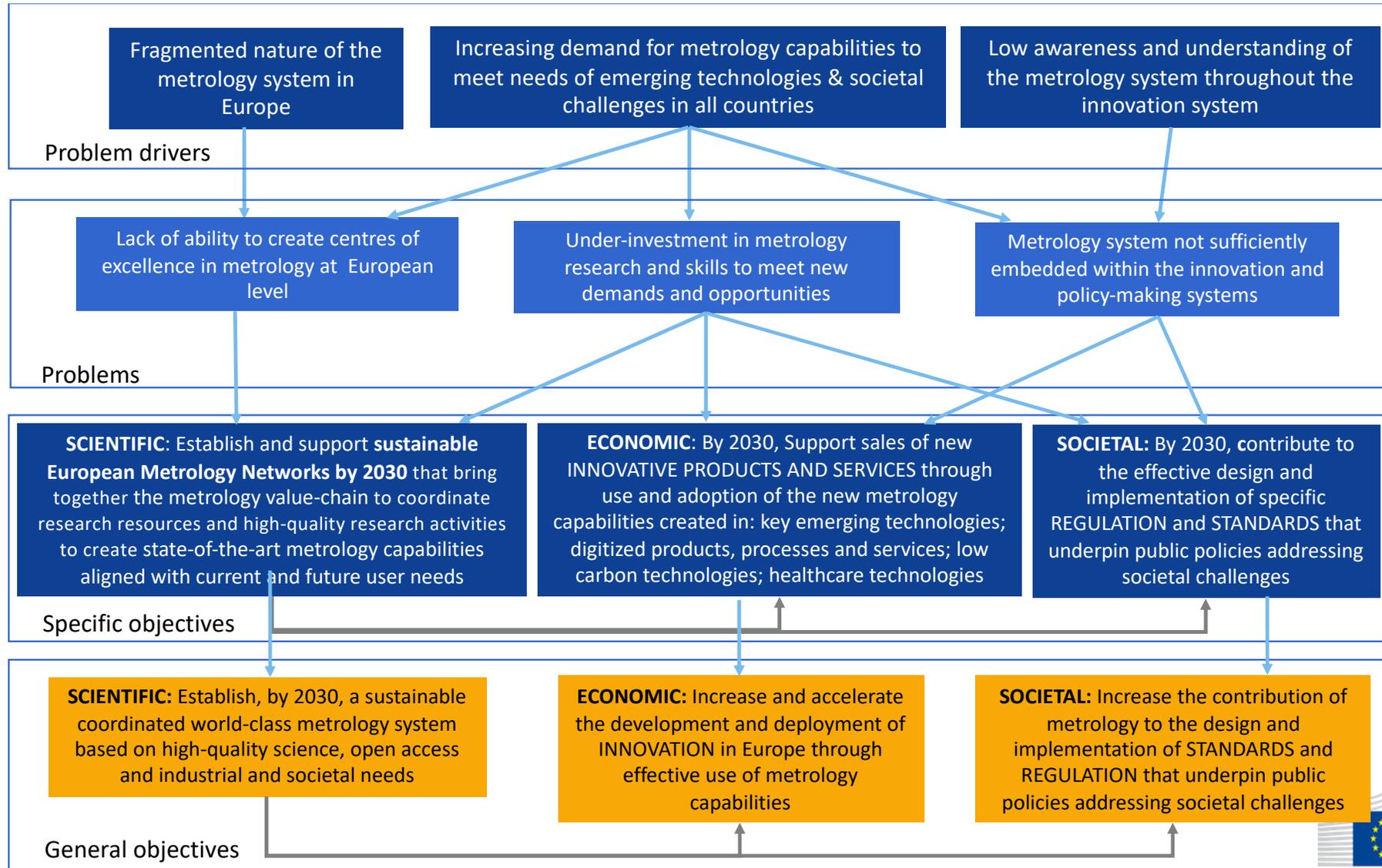
- Horizon Europe Regulation specifies in Annex III detailed criteria for the selection, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, phasing-out and renewal
 - A draft Criteria Framework aims at providing a better understanding of
 - the meaning of the criteria and how they need to be addressed along the lifecycle of a European Partnership;
 - the form of European Partnerships that might be best suited to achieve particular objectives;
 - essential elements that need to be developed in preparation of a proposal for a European Partnership.
- ➔ The document will be updated and revised, on the basis of the experience collected in the preparation of the first wave of European Partnerships (2021)**

Important to build a clear intervention logic

When? In the partnership proposals that are currently developed / revised

- 1. Problem definition:** What is the problem the European Partnerships is set to address? What are problem drivers and/or strategic opportunities, underlying research, innovation, deployment or systemic bottlenecks and/or market failures?
- 2. Develop a clear definition of objectives and expected impacts**
 - Define (a) general, (b) specific and (c) operational objectives
 - In particular the specific objectives need to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and, timely or time-bound);
 - Link objectives to Horizon Europe objectives, broader EU policy objectives, in particular priorities set by the new Commission (A European Green Deal, An economy that works for people, and A Europe fit for the Digital Age), and with relevant global strategies;
 - Make clear what should be achieved by 2030, with the R&I investment from the partnership.
- 3. Develop and describe an ambitious set of activities** that convincingly demonstrate that the objectives and expected impacts can be achieved by the partnerships.

Intervention logic: example (Metrology)



Necessity test for the European Partnership

Why is the European Partnership more effective in achieving objectives than traditional Horizon Europe calls?

Main lines of argumentation:

- **Directionality:** The need to ensure that efforts of partners and the union go into the same direction, towards agreed objectives and expected impacts via the SRIA&R)
- **Additionality:** For the success of the initiative, it is required that partners bring in additional resources, investment, commitments that the framework programme cannot provide.

When to address? In the partnership proposals that are currently developed / revised

- Demonstrate convincingly that the envisaged Partnership will be more effective in achieving the related objectives and expected impacts by e.g.:
 - extending cooperation well beyond collaborative R&I projects;
 - supporting more systematic innovative solutions / systemic transformation.
- Demonstrate a meaningful collaboration relevant national/regional authorities and their respective commitments to reach higher level of impacts, beyond the narrow scope of the partnerships activities.

Openness and transparency

A partnership will maximise its impacts by involving all relevant partners and stakeholders beyond the narrow composition of core partners and remaining open during its lifetime, serving the interests of all relevant stakeholders. Consequently, the implementation of the partnership via its work plans should include regular activities that allow new players to enter, participate in and benefit from its activities, and add value to the partnership without compromising ownership and commitment from the partners.

Need to develop measures and a governance that ensure

- Partnership is established with a broad, open and transparent approach towards different sectors and geographical areas including international partners when relevant;
- Open and transparent processes for consulting all relevant stakeholders for the identification of its priorities and the design of its activities (including for the preparation of Annual Work Programmes);
- Involvement of new partners in the partnerships, including open policy to membership and member services in private associations;
- Appropriate level of openness in implementation, in particular for participation in its calls for proposals;
- Communication and dissemination - broadly and through various channels to ensure the necessary information is available to all possible stakeholders, all along its life time.

Long term commitment

A partnership will only be successful, if all partners are and remain committed and provide and maintain binding commitments for the necessary financial and/or in-kind contributions necessary to achieve the objectives. In addition, to support the idea of 'directionality, indications on the share of overall investments coordinated through the partnership are expected.

All partnership proposals need to include clear commitments from all partners other than the EU

When will they be formalised:

- **Co-programmed**
Signature of the “MoUs” (before adopting Annual Work Programme Horizon Europe).
- **Co-funded**
 - At the moment of including the topic for the Programme-co-fund action supporting the Partnerships in the draft Annual Work Programme Horizon Europe.
 - Confirmation with the submission of proposals and signature of Grant Agreement.
- **Article 185/187:** adoption of COM proposal (basic act).

Systemic approach ensuring achievement of impacts

The 'systemic' refers to the underlying intervention logic and links up the research and innovation measures of the partnerships. The partnership should be able to deploy the necessary broad range of activities and adjust them to its needs over time, going beyond the classical calls for R&I proposals, including those related to market, regulatory, societal or policy uptake.

- Objectives, expected impacts, contributions etc. to be defined ex-ante for each partnership (in the MoU, Grant Agreement, Basic Act)
- Overall targets for the partnership are outlined in the **Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda** and in annual **work plans** specifying intermediate steps, expected outcomes, deliverables, milestones;
- A **broad range of activities** including calls for R&I proposals, up to demonstration and validation, as well as joint activities beyond joint calls that effectively support achieving its objectives.
- Mechanisms are in place that ensure **complementarity of activities** and avoid unnecessary duplications with other relevant initiatives of Horizon Europe (including partnerships and missions).
- The partnership takes early on into account relevant standardisation, regulation and certification issues to maximize the impact of its actions and **ensure market, regulatory or policy uptake.**

Exit strategy and measures for phasing-out from the Framework Programme funding

While legally speaking, there has always been a time limit on partnerships by being part of the MFF, the reality is that most partnerships do not prepare themselves for a phasing-out and expect continued funding from the next Framework Programme. Future partnerships should include activities allowing for an orderly phasing-out or exit from Framework Programme funding.

- Identify in your proposal a credible exit-strategy (or sustainability strategy without EU funding), with measures for preparing and implementing its winding down at the end of its expected mandate, or once it reached its objectives, whichever comes first, including a time limit for the activities of the partnership.
- Include appropriate timelines, measures and conditions to decide its phasing out and/or the phasing out of Framework Programme funding. This shall be without prejudice to other national or Union programmes, which might continue to fund initiatives;
- Introduce a realistic business plan for winding down operation or continuation outside the scope of Framework Programme support. This has to ensure among others the continuity of exploitation and dissemination activities beyond the duration of the Union participation.

Thank you!

Comments? Questions?