

# Consultation on Green Paper – towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU research and innovation funding

## Meta Informations

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## Your details

I am answering as	on behalf of an association
My/ my organisation's country of location is	Belgium
My/ my organisation's main activity is	Other
The name of my organisation is	Quaker Council for European Affairs - (ID on Commission Register of Interests: 3960234639-24)
Have you or your organisation received funding in the last three years from	None of the above
Have you or do you intend to submit a separate written response to this consultation	Yes

## Working together to deliver on Europe 2020

**1. How should the Common Strategic Framework make EU research and innovation more attractive and easy to access for participants? What is needed in addition to a single entry point with common IT tools, a one stop shop for support, a streamlined set of funding instruments covering the full**

**innovation chain and further steps towards administrative simplification?**

From our point of view, it is not the ease of access and attractiveness per se that is important. What is important is to attract the kind of research that will help to solve the societal challenges the EU has identified and that are seen as key challenges by citizens. It is important to look at the type of research that is being funded – and – importantly the research that is not being funded. We believe far more funding should be targeted at priority areas such as energy because not only are we going to need to transition to low-carbon sources of energy to replace coal-fired power stations, but we have the means of technology and know-how to reduce our energy dependence, but lack the social insight and the courage to prod homeowners and individuals to be part of the solution. The public have seriously been underestimated for their impact to deliver on energy policy and no amount of one-stop-shop approaches is going to make as significant a difference as if we elevated the significance of public involvement in decision-making.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Of some importance

**2. How should EU funding best cover the full innovation cycle from research to market uptake?**

Research funded by public funds should primarily produce public benefits rather than private profit. It is therefore essential that EU research funding is focused on societal needs rather than industry demand. Research should be about solving problems which European society has to deal with rather than funding more innovative products which industry can sell whether they help to solve the problems we face or not. It should not just be about growth and jobs.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Important

**3. What are the characteristics of EU funding that maximise the benefit of acting at the EU level? Should there be a strong emphasis on leveraging other sources of funding?**

EU funding is public funding and should only be invested in public goods; that means that research funded from public EU money should be directed at solving societal challenges with grass-roots involvement at all relevant stages to ensure that the solutions are focused on the societal challenges. Beyond that, EU funding should add value; i.e. it should fund projects that cannot be done better at national level. Bringing together expertise across borders, sharing best practice and new insights, and working collaboratively on common challenges should be the drivers. Large scale partnership projects which essentially can only be done by large and well resourced organisations often swallow up funding in coordination without actually adding anything to the results.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Important

**4. How should EU research and innovation funding be used to pool Member States' research and innovation resources? Should Joint Programming Initiatives between groups of Member States be supported?**

Joint Programming Initiatives between groups of Member States should be supported, for example for environmental and energy projects, which require large expenditure and have long investment periods. Concerto and Concerto-Plus were good initiatives addressing the challenge of creating a more sustainable future, particularly with respect to energy. A good example would be a joint programme that addresses fuel poverty and moves the de-carbonisation agenda forward. Joint Programming Initiatives should be used to prioritise research that leads to human security over research that focuses only on national security; research that addresses the root causes of current global problems, not just technological fixes to them; climate justice not climate profiteering; food security not agri-business; public health systems not pharmaceutical patents and so on.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Very important

**5. What should be the balance between smaller, targeted projects and**

**larger, strategic ones?**

Smaller projects are typically limited by critical mass issues. With respect to the energy challenges we face, urban environments are where most of the potential lies, with innovative energy solutions regularly becoming a reality. It is suggested that by 2050, up to 80 per cent of the population will live and work in (peri)urban areas. Within the Concerto-Plus project, significant successes were seen in the communities of Hamburg and Grenoble, whereas smaller project hardly got off the ground (in these initial stages). With innovative solutions and the multiplier effect of larger projects, the sheer volume, scale, and leadership of the larger projects is a strong influence on wider uptake. The solution resolutely remains local, but there are the achievable, practical solutions available to us in Europe. Properly targeted (addressing societal problems, not industry profits), larger, strategic projects has the potential to lead the way. Research projects should - even if they are designed on a larger scale - include an express commitment to translating the results into local, community based applications.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Important

**6.How could the Commission ensure the balance between a unique set of rules allowing for radical simplification and the necessity to keep a certain degree of flexibility and diversity to achieve objectives of different instruments, and respond to the needs of different beneficiaries, in particular SMEs?**

Administrative complexity is not something we would advocate in any area. Simplifying the rules and administrative burden of research projects is helpful; but this needs to be set against the need to ensure that research projects funded by EU (i.e. taxpayer's) funds contribute to the solving of societal problems which the EU and EU citizens face; this should include issues where the EU impacts on the lives and well-being of people elsewhere. There need therefore to be safeguards in the design of projects and in their assessment which ensure that research is democratically governed and that this is transparent; that the purpose of research is judged against the priority challenges which the EU faces - policy challenges which are clearly set out in the Lisbon Treaty and elsewhere; that research projects and the approach taken to research is in line with the values and principles of the EU and that the participants conform to the standards of the Charter of Fundamental Rights; and that the ethical aspects of research projects and programmes in all relevant areas are critically assessed against agreed standards and criteria.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Important

**7.What should be the measure of success for EU research and innovation funding?**

**Which performances indicators could be used?**

Before it is possible to discuss the performance indicators it is necessary to define the purpose of funding research from public funds. Therefore, the Research Framework Programme should, in its legal basis, set out this purpose, both generally and specifically for each of the different programme areas. At its most basic, public funds for public goods should be the fundamental criteria. Performance indicators which are linked too much to the production of marketable products for private profit will misdirect research effort and research funding and therefore should be avoided. One of the major general indicators that should be included is the question: does the programme/project contribute to conflict prevention; this is relevant in many areas of the Research Programme, not least in areas such as food, agriculture, nanosciences and nanotechnologies, resource efficiency, energy, environmental sciences, transport, security, space and nuclear science. Another critical indicator - not so much of performance as of appropriateness - is the question: are the risks involved in the research containable and justifiable. This, too is an area where public debate is essential. Finally, measures relating to the ethical and international humanitarian law impacts of EU research and innovation funding must be taken into account when EU research policy is assessed.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Very important

**8.How should EU research and innovation funding relate to regional and**

**national funding? How should this funding complement funds from the future Cohesion policy, designed to help the less developed regions of the EU, and the rural development fund?**

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

**Tackling Societal Challenges**

**9. How should a stronger focus on societal challenges affect the balance between curiosity-driven research and agenda-driven activities?**

Public funding for research should address public/societal challenges; in order to ensure that this happens, it is important to have an open and transparent discussion with societal actors - not just industry, not just academics - to identify the key questions that need to be solved. It is an insult to suggest that research can simply be curiosity driven. Scientists pursue research because the wonderment of the universe is beautiful. Many of the most renowned scientists accomplished research of the most direct societal impact (which is not always evident at the time their exploration). Policy agendas only come after quality, societally minded science. The fundamental question is and remains: which areas of research should be supported by European public funding. And the answer is: research that intends to address the societal challenges we face, such as climate change, energy and other resource efficiency; public health challenges; global food security; global water security; peacebuilding; implementation of full respect for human rights. This is not the same as saying that such research is following the policy agenda politicians and industry have developed already; rather, it is to support research that starts from an understanding of the big challenges and seeks to contribute to their real solutions for the common global good. If the agenda that drives the research is the agenda of industry to make and sell more things then that is not an agenda we would support.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Important

**10. Should there be more room for bottom-up activities?**

Grass-roots agenda setting is important, as is the involvement of citizens and civil society in research activities in order to ensure that there is a public debate about the potential solutions to societal challenges.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Of some importance

**11. How should EU research and innovation funding best support policy making and forward looking activities?**

One of the best ways of informing policy through research is to not put all the emphasis of the research programme on technology. It is critically important to support social science research which addresses the societal challenges from a policy perspective in order to frame the agenda for technological research. The EU should not spend public money to help industry to make more 'stuff'; the EU should spend public money to research the solutions to problems we face - where that leads to the identification of gaps in available technology then that may be a useful way of supporting technological research. Taking the example of energy security policy - an area which the EU has identified as important - there is already a lot of technical and technological know-how out there; what is needed is some know-how (and political will) to use it. Just making more technological advances will not solve the problem of energy security. At the most basic, all political decision-making - at European level and elsewhere - should be underpinned by evidence-based research. That provides a large agenda for necessary research to be funded.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Important

**12. How should the role of the Commission's Joint Research Centre be improved in supporting policy making and forward looking activities?**

The JRC is critical for informing policy, but is chronically under-funded. The meagre 1% devoted to dissemination applies to policy-makers as well. The JRC does some wonderful research, with limited and constrained means; getting the policy makers to listen to the evidence-based research results is another matter altogether.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Important

**13. How could EU research and innovation activities attract greater interest and involvement of citizens and civil society?**

The involvement of citizens and civil society is important; this needs to be factored into research and research policy at all levels. The EU needs to make it clear - in language that is accessible to interested citizens - what it is trying to achieve, how it is going about achieving it, what it spends its money on, who is involved in decision-making, and what the outcomes are. None of that is currently a given. Research projects should demonstrate in their conception how they will involve citizens and civil society in the development of the research agenda where appropriate and in discussing results as they emerge to ensure that the social impact of the research results are fully assessed and addressed. There is an issue of trust here - the trust the public has in research results and claims made by companies about research and resulting products. The watch-word is: If you want to be trusted more, claim less. All too often, in pursuit of narrow political interests, or industrial profits, flimsy research is over-promoted such that consumers know they have been misled, or soon therefore contradictory evidence emerges. The public is (typically) unable to vet the merits of different research, or even be aware of the reasons why two studies would yield different results. Evidence-based research benefits the whole of society; its abuse for short-term gain undermines the entire effort.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Very important

**Strengthening competitiveness**

**14. How should EU funding best take account of the broad nature of innovation, including non technological innovation, eco-innovation, and social innovation?**

Innovation has an agreed definition; technological innovation can be understood at a stretch, but we suspect eco-innovation and social innovation are co-opted agendas with no real meaning. Essentially they thinly veil self-interested agendas of industry. Innovative solutions to our ecological and societal challenges are certainly welcomed. But all too often, what is hailed as innovation is just another way of selling something new. The public know this and more of this therefore has the potential cause more apathy in response to research.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Of some importance

**15. How should industrial participation in EU research and innovation programmes be strengthened? How should Joint Technology Initiatives (such as those launched in the current Framework Programmes) or different forms of "public private partnership" be supported? What should be the role of European Technology Platforms?**

As we have said before, we believe that industrial participation in research should not be the primary driver, focus or goal of EU Research policy; where industry is involved, the questions relating to the benefit derived from patents and royalties arising from publicly funded research and the extent to which such benefit accrues to the public and the public purse need to be assessed carefully. This also raises the question of the extent of involvement of industry actors in the design of the research policy and the annual programmes in the first place; there are

powerful potential and actual conflicts of interest which need to be managed. The EU - rather than industry - should be in the driving seat of Research policy which is funded from the EU budget; that means political control of where public money goes. In our view, new technologies, and public-private partnerships will not, and can not, deliver the same extent of innovation as a public properly engaged. We feel that public involvement is important, and that the public participation potential continues to be greatly underutilised. At the heart of European research programme needs to be recognition of communities (not businesses).

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Important

**16. How and what type of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) should be supported at EU level; how should this complement national and regional level schemes? What kind of measures should be taken to decisively facilitate the participation of SMEs in EU research and innovation programmes?**

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

**17. How should open, light and fast implementation schemes (e.g. building on the current FET actions and CIP eco-innovation market replication projects) be designed to allow flexible exploration and commercialisation of novel ideas, in particular by SMEs?**

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

**18. How should EU level financial instruments (equity and debt based) be used more extensively?**

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

**19. Should new approaches to supporting research and innovation be introduced, in particular through public procurement, including through rules on pre-commercial procurement, and/or inducement prizes?**

Prizes, although useful, and of wider general interest, typically do not recognise the sheer tedium, exhaustion and attention to detail sometimes required in research. Prizes are generally won by a small pool of extroverted individuals, with limited recognition of the behind-the-scenes efforts competed in support of the wider effort.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Important

**20. How should intellectual property rules governing EU funding strike the right balance between competitiveness aspects and the need for access to and dissemination of scientific results?**

To realise the full innovation of Europe, it is necessary that access to and dissemination of scientific results take priority over narrow competitiveness. Libel reform may also be necessary as narrow competitiveness interests have shown a damaging willingness to discredit evidence-based research (because it harms their narrow interests). Creative licensing of intellectual property, to make it as widely and that is also to say cheaply available, is the only way to realised Europe's genuine innovation potential. A less than enthusiastic response to easing intellectual property restrictions is to see Europe fall behind the rest of the world, including the pioneers who will migrate to clusters of creativity and opportunity.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Of some importance

## **Strengthening Europe's science base and the European Research Area**

### **21. How should the role of the European Research Council be strengthened in supporting world class excellence?**

Less political meddling, less bureaucracy, less red tape - let the researchers get on with what they know best, which isn't pretending to be politicians! The European Commission's strict rules on finance and administration are hampering efforts by the European Research Council to fund scientists. The rigid bureaucracy is causing peer reviewers to desert the grant-review process, threatening the future viability of the ERC. It should be responsible for its own budget and be allowed to create its own rules on administration, structure and employment. As an executive agency of the European Commission, it cannot do this at present. The European Research Council must be given the power and responsibility to oversee that European research funding is not allowed to benefit institutions and companies that are responsible for human rights abuses or complicit with violations of international humanitarian law. The European Research Council must be open to civil society engagement on issues of ethics, conformity with international humanitarian law of research project participants and the human rights impacts of the activities of research project participants and the outcomes of EU funded projects. The European Research Council must ensure that processes relating to the administration of EU research policy are transparent and directly accountable to member states and civil society and to the European Parliament.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Very important

### **22. How should EU support assist Member States in building up excellence?**

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

### **23. How should the role of Marie Curie Actions be strengthened in promoting researcher mobility and developing attractive careers?**

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

### **24. What actions should be taken at EU level to further**

**strengthen the role of women in science and innovation?**

Overt sexism is no longer the norm, but societal barriers remain for women in science and innovation. Multiple strands – some social, some biological, some institutional – can make it significantly harder for female researchers to achieve as much, as fast, as their male counterparts. Trade-offs between pursuing a career and raising a family, coupled with societal factors and gender expectations that can influence professional choices at a young age, are more likely to account for the shortage of women in some fields. Actions that should be taken:

- Ensure social welfare programmes are not cut.
- Ensure education is properly supported.
- Seek to address the gap in wages between men and women.
- Promote flexible tenure policies for women with young children.
- Implement educational programmes to assist female graduate students to make more informed decisions about family and career.
- Ensure that the participation of women in science and research is systematically monitored and reported on at all levels to identify where the blockages occur. The very act of active monitoring can - at times - remove barriers.

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Very important

**25. How should research infrastructures (including EU-wide e-Infrastructures) be supported at EU level?**

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

**26. How should international cooperation with non-EU countries be supported e.g. in terms of priority areas of strategic interest, instruments, reciprocity (including on IPR aspects) or cooperation with Member States?**

We support international cooperation; however, we are also convinced that especially where research addresses big societal challenges, the values which lie behind the approach taken by researchers are important. We are therefore of the view that for all research projects participants need to demonstrate that they fully comply with the standards set down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and that they subscribe to the values enshrined in the EU Treaties in all of their actions and activities. Cooperation must be based on non-EU countries respecting international humanitarian law and universal principles of human rights. Where cooperating non-EU countries are involved in conflicts, best practise as outlined in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights should be used to guide the administration of research funds. These guidelines stipulate that states should uphold respect for human rights by “Denying access to public support and services for a business enterprise that is involved with gross human rights abuses and refuses to cooperate in addressing the situation.”

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**

Very important

**27. Which key issues and obstacles concerning ERA should EU funding instruments seek to overcome, and which should be addressed by other (e.g. legislative) measures?**

**How important are the aspects covered in this question?**



**Closing question**

**Are there any other ideas of comments which you believe are important for future EU research and innovation funding and are not covered in the Green Paper?**

Our primary concern with regard to the EU Research policy and agenda is the question of ethics; we define this as an issue that goes far beyond bio-ethics which are already enshrined in the legal basis for FP7; we also believe that ethics goes beyond the question of 'privacy' which is now being added to the discussion. We are therefore supplying a further document uploaded at the start of this questionnaire setting out our concerns and proposals on this subject.