

## ISE main recommendations towards Framework Programme 10 (FP10)

Brussels, 27.2.2025

### Ensure a stronger stand-alone R&I Framework Programme with a ringfenced budget

ISE firmly supports the need to scale up European Research, Development, and Innovation (RD&I) through a **stronger framework programme with a ringfenced budget** that allows for funding ideally all first-ranked project proposals throughout the programme.

ISE calls for a **transfer of funds from other EU programmes to the Framework Programme** when activities have been shifted / will be shifted from these to the R&I FP. This is relevant to activities on e.g. citizens / societal / stakeholder engagement (European Social Fund, ESF), farmer networks / multi-actor approaches (EU Common Agricultural Policy Fund, CAP).

### Boost collaborative basic research to create an upward Research & Innovation spiral in the collaboration pillar

Throughout Horizon 2020 and currently in Horizon Europe, collaborative basic research has been marginalised, resulting in a gap in the Research and Innovation cycle.

In Horizon Europe and in the upcoming FP10, **the collaboration part** (Pillar 2 in HE) must be designed to achieve a **balanced participation from basic and applied research in addition to demonstration and innovation actions**. This will strengthen the effectiveness of the R&I cycle of the European research and innovation ecosystem by promoting a continuous exchange between advancement of knowledge and applications at different TRLs. Ultimately, this strategy will meet the needs of the industrial sector and private companies.

To help overcome the gap of collaborative basic research and complete the research and innovation cycle in the R&I continuum, ISE recommends making collaborative basic research an intrinsic component of an existing instrument (R&I Actions) and **introducing a new instrument (Research Actions) focussed on collaborative basic and applied research**. This is particularly necessary to address Global Challenges. In this way **an upward spiral would be created** that is adding new knowledge in each round, elevating the innovation to the next higher level.

### Shield Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and the European Research Council

Two programmes, the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and the European Research Council (ERC), each with different yet complementary objectives and criteria, have demonstrated their exceptional ability to **identify and promote excellence in Europe**.

They are the only programmes currently funding bottom-up, curiosity-driven, and ground-breaking research at the frontier of knowledge. Both **produce new knowledge** and have **yielded useable outcomes and unexpected economic and social benefits**. An illustration of their impact is the fact that most EU innovation grant winners in 2022 were ERC grantees. Both programmes provide funding opportunities for the best projects, the best researchers, and the best teams across the entire European Research Area. They **attract researchers to Europe from all over the world**, promoting the visibility of European excellence worldwide. Thus, the roles played by the ERC and MSCA within the framework programmes are of utmost importance for European progress.

As a significant number of submitted proposals above the excellence threshold go unfunded, ISE recommends that the Excellent Science Pillar budget be **shielded from any cut** during the remaining years of Horizon Europe **and be increased in the upcoming framework programme**.

To preserve the important role of the ERC for frontier research and for driving innovation, ISE urges that the **independence of the Scientific Council** of the ERC is maintained.

## Polymakers should define the goals but leave the pathways to reach them open

For the pillars with a top-down component ('Global Challenges' and 'Innovative Europe'), policymakers should define the goals but leave the choice of the pathways to them open to the stakeholders to encourage innovation, flexibility, and evidence-based confirmation. This would allow pathways to compete as they are neither preferred nor excluded and combining the advantages of different approaches can be encouraged. Furthermore, this approach would enable policymakers to mobilise the European research and innovation community and all interested actors to achieve the targets set out for example in the EU Green Deal and in the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

FP10 could for instance have **much broader calls inviting contributions to a certain goal** and then **fund a group of topics encouraging true innovation**.

## Increase trust in and flexibility for beneficiaries – researchers and innovators

In a constantly changing world, R&I actors need to be able to react to new circumstances, demands and opportunities in an ongoing project. Increased trust and flexibility will radically simplify the Framework Programme for all actors so that their **efforts can focus on content and impact rather than administration**. Once a proposal has been selected for funding by evaluators and the Grant Agreement with the EC has been signed, the consortium should have full flexibility in implementation – shifting efforts between Work Packages, partners and approaches to the benefit of the agreed project outcome. Reporting will be much lighter and focus on outcome.

## Consult both, European science associations and European industry associations, on R&I strategy and policy

European science associations have broad scientific expertise and geographical representation across Europe and beyond. They collaborate with a range of stakeholders, including companies. They work on science support and increasingly on science strategy and can **provide well balanced science-based advice to policymakers**.

Similarly, European industry associations can provide well balanced advice from a broad range of companies to policymakers.

Regular consultation of these stakeholders is essential to achieve our common EU ambitions.

## Other priorities of ISE

- The Widening challenge - facilitate access to the three Pillars in HE.
- Without Researchers no Research, provide quality jobs for all wherever they are in the EU.
- Facilitate interdisciplinarity & emerging fields in research projects.
- Promote research in social sciences and humanities – essential for societies, democracy, education and jobs.
- Science diplomacy and Academic freedom are important stakes of Europe's soft power.

## About ISE:

The Initiative for Science in Europe (ISE) is an independent platform of European Learned Societies and Research Organizations supporting all fields of science at a European level to engage in European science strategies and policies. <http://initiative-se.eu>

## Links:

[ISE Press Release HL Expert Group report on the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe](#), 18.10.2024  
[ISE Annex on Boost collaborative basic research in HE and FP10 V3](#), 15.1.2025  
[ISE position Horizon Europe consultation & Press Release](#) 20.2.&3.3.2023; updated October 2023.  
[ISE position on Horizon Europe](#), 12.7.2021

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