Funding synergies and the research & innovation infrastructure in Bulgaria: linking in business and supporting start-ups

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Sofia, 14 July 2016
I JASPERS: Who are we?

JASPERS: Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions

- Technical assistance partnership between:
  - European Commission (DG REGIO),
  - European Investment Bank (EIB),
  - European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).
- For administrative purposes, JASPERS is a Unit within the EIB.
- Main mandate: assist the Member States in the preparation of major projects.
- Main objectives: quicker approval and better quality of applications.
- JASPERS assistance is voluntary for the Member States and free of charge.
II JASPERS: Where do we intervene?

- **Sectors:**
  - Roads,
  - Rail and Public Transport,
  - Water and Waste Water Treatment,
  - Energy and Solid Waste,
  - Smart Development (Research & Development, ICT, Health, Education, Urban Development and Multi-sector projects)

- Since 2006 more than **920 completed JASPERS assignments** (of which 470 major project submissions)

- **435+ JASPERS-supported applications have been approved** by the EC so far (as of mid-2015).

- Major projects in ICT and RDI: total eligible costs (eligible expenses = eligible investment costs - net revenues) > **50 million EUR**
III JASPERS Assistance to Major Projects

- Support to project preparation means continuous quality check during the project cycle, with **Completion Note** at the end with summary of conclusions, with focus on
  - Technical feasibility,
  - Option analysis
  - Demand analysis,
  - Financial analysis, economic CBA and risk assessment
  - Analysis of Environmental soundness,
  - State Aid

- **JASPERS does not prepare projects on behalf of the beneficiary.**

- **Early involvement** during the project cycle yields the best results.

- **Quickest approval procedure** when JASPERS Advisory and IQR are used.
Synergies between funding sources are part of the JASPERS process

- Our mandate is tied to **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)**, mainly ERDF and the Cohesion Fund

- But **we look at funding comprehensively:**
  - Forms of funding, including via funds or PPPs
  - Liquidity issues
  - Co-funding from:
    - National sources – public and **private sector** if applicable
    - Other structural funds, e.g. ESF, EARDF
    - Other European initiatives: Connecting Europe Facility, H2020
The characteristics of multiple funding sources can contribute to these goals

- They can also impose additional constraints
Financial sustainability is a key issue

<table>
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<tr>
<th>INFRASTRUCTURE</th>
<th>OPERATIONS</th>
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<td>▪ Government funds</td>
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<td>▪ H2020 → for excellent (joint) projects</td>
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<td>▪ ESIF → for capacity-building in a specific MS</td>
<td>▪ Private sector contracts?</td>
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<td>▪ Partnerships with the private sector?</td>
<td>▪ Commercialisation of licenses?</td>
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<td>▪ Other activities? events, training etc.</td>
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There is no sustainability silver bullet but some open questions

Issues observed:
- **Projects without guaranteed funding?**
- Funding not used for its **primary purposes**, due to sustainability issue?
- **Funding not available** for certain legitimate purposes?
- **Fear of State aid** – related difficulties leading to inadequately low private-sector funding?

Some important questions:
- What is the market failure, to start with?
- What is/are the most appropriate source of funding, to achieve the project’s, and more generally the OP’s objectives?
- Are the project selection, preparation, implementation processes effective?

Useful bits of experience:
- Partnerships with the private sector can work, may require appropriate rules
- Revenue from licenses may be small
- Clusters, shared facilities etc. can improve financial sustainability
Noteworthy practices can be found in various ESIF-supported projects

- Cross-border partnerships between research centres
- Scientific-industrial networks
- Industrial doctorates, part-time appointments
- Labels for sustainable/guaranteed products
- Licensing, Technology Transfer
- Shared facilities
- Science/Technology parks, shared campuses

Supply of services:
- Visiting researcher jobs
- Training
- Venue / meeting rooms
- Start up incubator
- Materials testing
- Spectroscopy
- Food irradiation
- Prototyping
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