



Synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) & Research and Innovation Funding: The Stairway to Excellence

Date: 14 July 2016

Venue: Hotel Balkan, 5 Sveta Nedelya Square, Sofia, 1000 Bulgaria

Rationale

The development of Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) requires that European regions and Member States identify a limited number of research areas and industrial activities with high innovation potential at the regional or national level. These strategies have to be implemented using European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), which can also be combined with other types of funding. Supporting synergies between funding sources (also including COSME, ERASMUS+, and Creative Europe etc.) should deliver additional gains in terms of competitiveness in Horizon 2020 calls, innovation results that could contribute to closing the innovation gap in Europe and therefore promote economic growth, and overall have greater efficiency in the use of public funding.

The "Stairway to Excellence" project is centred on:

- The provision of assistance to Member States (MS) who joined the European Union since 2004 with the aim of closing the innovation gap and promoting excellence in EU regions and Member States;
- Stimulating the early and effective implementation of national and regional Smart Specialisation Strategies.

Objectives of the Conference

The principal objectives of this national event are:

- A better understanding of the Bulgarian national (and regional) innovation ecosystem(s) with a special emphasis on the identification of obstacles, barriers and potentials to innovation.
- Raising awareness of the actions needed to enable synergies between European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and other programmes for research and innovation.
- Sharing experiences in combining Structural Funds and Framework Programmes (FP) (including Horizon 2020) to improve excellence in R&I systems.
- Drawing lessons for the future and identifying follow-up actions to enhance the potential synergies between different EU funds in Bulgaria.

Who should attend?

- *Planned Participants:* 80-120 people
- Bulgarian national and regional managing authorities (of ERDF, ESF, EARDF Operational Programmes) involved in the implementation of the Smart specialisation strategy.
- Bulgarian national contact points from the past Framework Programmes and Horizon 2020 and other EU-funded programmes.
- Bulgarian national and regional authorities in charge of smart specialisation strategies.
- Members of the Horizon 2020 programme committee.
- Selected national and international experts on EU funding programmes and regional policy.
- Selected representatives from businesses.
- Selected representatives from universities, research centres and other organizations with experience and/or interest in EU-funded programmes.

Organisers: European Commission, Directorates-General Joint Research Centre (S3 Platform) & Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO), Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Agenda

08:30– 09:00	Registration and welcome coffee
WELCOME SPEECHES	
09:00 – 09:30	Ms Daniela Vezieva (Deputy Minister of Economy) Mr Krassimir Kiriakov (Deputy Minister of Education and Science)
OPENING SESSION – Policy context	
9:30-10:45	<p>Moderator : Katja Reppel (European Commission, DG REGIO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergies with R&I funds: Stairway to Excellence Andrea Conte (European Commission, DG JRC) • Bulgarian implementation of the RIS3: Operational Programme for Innovation and Competitiveness Dimitar Platnikov (Ministry of Economy) • Bulgarian implementation of the RIS3: Operational Programme for Science and Education for Smart Growth Ivan Modev (Ministry of Education and Science) • Bulgarian profile in terms of participation in the Framework Programmes and ESIF Mathieu Doussineau (European Commission, DG JRC) <p>Questions & Answers</p>
10:45-11:15	Coffee break
The Research and innovation context and the implementation of synergies	
11:15-13:30	<p>Moderator: Eskarne Arregui (European Commission, DG JRC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of synergies between programmes on scientific and economic results Albena Vutsova (Sofia University) • Challenges on RIS3 implementation in South Eastern Europe. Henning Kroll (Fraunhofer Institute) • Spreading excellence and widening participation. The Seal of Excellence initiative Ralitsa Atanasova (European Commission, DG RTD) • Synergies between ESIF and EIT instruments: focus on KIC InnoEnergy and Climate KIC Mariyana Hamanova (Cleantech, Bulgaria) <p>Questions & Answers - Introduction to the table discussions</p> <p>Discussion topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How to build up business and science capacities for the excellent research and innovation, participation in international networks & increase H2020 participation (upstream activities)</i> • <i>How to better design and manage research projects so that their results can be exploited and create social/economic impacts? (downstream activities)</i> • <i>What are the incentives, obstacles and opportunities for policy makers and innovation stakeholders to maximise societal impact of EU R&I funding instruments? (stakeholder involvement)</i>

13:30 -14:30	Lunch Break
Examples for Synergies in Practice	
14:30-16:45	<p><i>This session will consist of an open debate in the plenary on the results of the previous discussion tables and animated by speakers coming from different background and professional experience.</i></p> <p>Moderator: Strahil Christov (European Commission, DG REGIO)</p> <p>Reporting on the parallel discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example on ESIF/H2020 synergies - Cluster AeroSpace Technologies, Research and Applications Vesselin Vassilev (Cluster AeroSpace Technologies, Research and Applications (CASTRA)) • Example on ESIF/H2020 synergies - ICT Cluster Peter Statev (ICT Cluster) • Synergies and research and innovation infrastructures in Bulgaria: linking in business and supporting start-ups Louis-Philippe Carrier (JASPERS, European Investment Bank) • Example on ESIF/H2020 synergies – EUREKA/EUROSTARS Nina Commeau (EUREKA- EUROSTARS) • Example of synergies in the implementation of library innovations Sabina Aneva (NALIS Foundation) <p>Open debate</p>
16:45-17:00	<p>Conclusions and ways forward Ministry of Economy and European Commission</p>