

Draft deliverable D2 of the Transitional Forum of R&I Partnerships

Recommendations for the scope, approach and necessary resources of foresight activities

A. Background

The aspect of foresight activities within the planned Forum for R&I Partnerships did not directly result from the ERAC conclusions and recommendations on partnerships, but emerged as an important element from the preparatory discussions on the Forum in order to support the portfolio development and take into account the experiences with the Joint Programming Process. The Transitional Forum is expected to provide strategic input and advise on the scope, approach and necessary resources for foresight in relation to possible future partnerships. It should include links between the strategic foresight exercises at international (e.g. OECD), EU and national levels.

B. Overall ambition and objective

Foresight will help the Forum for R&I Partnerships to identify gaps and emerging opportunities in the landscape of R&I partnerships of European relevance, including new policy directions at national and EU level that require large common investments in view of informing the direction of EU and MS/AC support. The baseline will be the existing/emerging landscape of R&I Partnerships of European relevance, including the outcome of the structured consultation of Member States and priorities suggested in that context. The foresight aspect of the Forum will in the first place consider additional opportunities against this baseline while avoiding mushrooming of requests for additional partnerships.

The objectives are to:

- **Connect partnership policies and strategic foresight exercises** at international (e.g. OECD), EU (JRC, strategic planning of Horizon Europe) and national levels in the context of programme-level collaboration between MS, and in the context of the identification of priorities for candidates for European Partnership. Moreover, it should allow to develop R&I policy intelligence on the use of partnership approach in addressing common challenges;
- **Assess the gaps and emerging opportunities** in the partnership landscape, as well as political priorities at national, regional and EU level with a focus on transnational collaboration;
- **Provide advice on highly populated areas** with high pressure for phasing out existing partnerships as a pre-condition for being able to create new ones.

It is not proposed to carry out any additional foresight activities as such, rather to ensure a mechanism to consolidate, analyse and discuss relevance of ongoing foresight activities in the context of Partnerships of pan-European relevance.

Since the selection of priorities for partnerships has also a political dimension (participation linked with budget planning) then there is the need to find a balance with what is useful as evidence-base for political decision-making. It should not duplicate or circumvent existing efforts on foresight, nor the consultation of partnership candidates in the strategic configuration programme committee.

It is underlined that the activities should have a practical use / outcome (and not become a burdensome, theoretical exercise). Due to the budget capping and the already high number of European Partnerships, there will only be little room for new priorities under Horizon Europe. Therefore, this exercise is likely to rather feed bottom-up MS initiatives (e.g. supported from Part IV) or even FP10 (de-)prioritisations.

C. Scope

Following the guidance from ERAC on the strategic coordinating process, the scope of the foresight process should be broad, covering all EU R&I Partnerships (thus, going beyond European Partnerships under the Framework Programme, and including also other MS-led joint programming initiatives). It should:

- Provide input to Member States to take into account emerging intelligence from different foresight sources when discussing areas for future programme level collaboration; and
- Inform the strategic Planning of Horizon Europe and its successor. The process should be organised in a way that it provides timely input to the second strategic planning of Horizon Europe, and if considered useful, also for the preparation of the successor programme.

This should also improve the understanding and the evidence base of the added value of the partnership approach vis-à-vis other R&I funding tools in addressing future challenges.

D. Key elements

The following tasks are proposed:

a) Task 1: Intelligence on foresight

This task aims to identify, collect and analyse the relevant existing foresight exercises on their scope and depth relevant for R&I partnerships, covering both the thematic part as well as R&I policy trends. It will build on R&I foresight activities at international (OECD), European (JRC, DG RTD activities) and national level (e.g. SITRA). According to available information, no current foresight process in Europe specifically deals with the issue of R&I partnerships of European relevance, as foresight tends to focus more on strategic orientations than R&I policy approaches. OECD has contributed to more systematic understanding of new trends in understanding partnership as a policy tool to address global challenges (e.g. STI Scoreboard), but less to understand which types of challenges are best to be tackled by a partnership approach (especially in the pan-European context).

It is proposed to organise as a first step a meeting with relevant services from OECD, European Commission and national administrations to further develop the methodology and build the basis for potential (needs-based) collaboration related to foresight in the context of the future Forum for R&I Partnerships. This will also take into consideration the additional resource requirements, the best way to provide them (expert group, tender, PSF etc.), and the follow-up. It will be important to articulate clearly the positioning of the foresight activities for partnerships in the context of ongoing foresight activities on the national/ European/ international levels, as well as the strategic planning of Horizon Europe and the phasing out of European Partnerships (reusing the results of existing foresight efforts).

Proposed timing: starting in Q3/2020

b) Task 2: Informing, supporting, embedding in the national context

In a second step, the outcome of task 1 would be used to inform national policy makers to collect their feedback and prepare a discussion on the relevance of the foresight findings in the national context and their interest and capacity to jointly address emerging priorities.

This will take into account emerging national R&I priorities and programmes, emerging R&I priorities (in view of second strategic planning), but also emerging challenges and political priorities that require orchestrated large scale investments.

Proposed timing: Q4/2021 – Q2/2022

c) Task 3: Identification of priorities for possible R&I Partnership candidates of European relevance

The identification of priorities will take into account emerging national R&I priorities and programmes, emerging European R&I priorities (in view of 2nd strategic planning), but also common challenges and political priorities that require orchestrated large-scale investments.

It will build on the outcome of Task 2 and provide access to consolidated evidence on priorities relevant for a partnership approach. This should allow Member States to identify and agree, in a structured process, on new priorities they consider as relevant for transnational programme level collaboration. These identified priorities can in principle be supported in the first instance from the ERA part of Horizon Europe, but can also inform the choice of additional European partnerships under the second strategic Planning of Horizon Europe, covering the years 2025-27.

Proposed timing: Q3/2022 – Q2/2023