

The status of preparation of MS/AC & Common guidelines for the design and implementation of national governance and monitoring mechanisms

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About this draft:

- This fourth draft integrates two rounds of input and comments made by the members of the Transitional Forum for R&I Partnerships. It has been discussed in the support group that assists the Member States and the Commission co-chairs in the planning, preparation and follow-up of the activities of the Transitional Forum.
- It was presented to the ERAC Steering Board on 29 April 2020.
- ERAC delegates are invited to send their input in writing at the latest by 11 June 2020. After that the document will be finalised and adopted by the Transitional Forum in view of making it publicly accessible.

Introduction

As a follow-up, the Transitional Forum has the task to deliver the following two deliverables:

- D3: Report on the status of preparation of Member States (MS) / Associated Countries (AC);
- D4: Common guidelines (enabling conditions) for the design and implementation of national governance structures, national monitoring mechanisms, etc.

It has been agreed by the members of the Transitional Forum to present the report on the status of preparation of MS/AC, and the common guidelines for the design and implementation of process in one document, as the topics are closely interrelated and complementary.

Against this background, the **purpose** of this report is to support national preparations for participation in partnerships, incl. related governance and monitoring mechanisms, by

- Providing a snapshot **on the state of play of national preparations**.
- Proposing and assessing a common **guidance on enabling conditions for better preparedness for national participation in European Partnerships**.
- Proposing **priorities for next steps** in increasing national preparedness, notably to improve communication on the new partnership approach towards stakeholder and to ensure that national data are available in time.

A **survey** was carried out with the support of ERA-LEARN in January and February 2020 among the members of the Transitional Forum to get coordinated feedback from countries on the status of preparations for the strategic coordinating process for EU R&I Partnerships. 27 countries replied to this survey¹. It allows a description of the state of play of preparations, identification of best practices and common problems. It also forms the basis for identifying building blocks for the common guidance.

The report is composed of three parts. The first gives a short overview of the overall progress of preparations. The second part lays down common guidance to improve preparedness, including next steps. The last section is an annex that gives a detailed overview of the survey results.

Analytical framework

This analysis of the status of preparations and common guidance builds on the analytical framework developed in the context of the Mutual Learning Exercise (MLE) on Alignment (2017)². It is founded in an understanding that successful participation in R&I partnerships depends very much on countries' capabilities to give meaningful inputs on national priorities, ensure commitment at the highest levels, understanding impacts and making them visible. These capabilities are important, both at the level of individual partnerships, as well as in the surrounding governance structures at EU-level (including the future 'Forum for R&I Partnerships').

There are two important novelties concerning the implementation and governance of future European Partnerships that need to be considered when discussing national preparedness. First, Horizon Europe introduces a more systematic approach, underpinned by common life-cycle criteria and the strategic coordinating process. In this context, an independent advisory mechanism ('Forum') is foreseen to provide inputs on the overall policy approach and implementation of partnerships. Second, there will be fewer, larger, more strategic and interdisciplinary European Partnerships. Thus, in the future the need to decide national participation will be less frequent (e.g. as is done now for ERA-NETs on annual basis). The focus will shift to providing inputs to the programming inside the partnerships, as well as to coordination between relevant Partnerships, clusters and missions.

¹ Belgium replies included responses at the Federal level, and of Flanders, FWB and Walloon Region

² https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/report/MLE-AI_final%20report_KI-AX-17-010-EN-N.pdf

Table 1. Key elements that shape the national preparedness (based on MLE Alignment)

Stage	Dimension	Related preconditions
Selection	Priority-setting & planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There should be an EU / international cooperation element within the national R&I strategy; ▪ Alignment of national strategies, instruments, resources and actors with the priorities of R&I partnerships ▪ Strategic decision making on priorities for participating in and ensuring commitment to R&I partnerships.
	Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process/ criteria for deciding participation in EU or other transnational initiatives, such as partnerships
	Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dedicated and flexible funding, budget and resources, including synergies between national and EU funding
Implementation	Coordination and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear governance structures, and roles ▪ Lead ministry/agency with dedicated and skilled human resources to enable effective participation; ▪ Coordination between the different Ministries and other national stakeholders for each partnership/ policy area; ▪ Communication and dissemination of participation opportunities and results to stakeholders.
	Monitoring & evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A systematic process for the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impacts from participation in networks, and making them visible.

I Snapshot on the state of play of national preparations

Are countries prepared to prioritise their national participation and commit resources?

Overall, countries seem to be well prepared for the ‘selection phase’ of Partnerships. All MS/AC have transnational cooperation element in their national R&I/sectoral strategies. Twenty-two countries are developing criteria for prioritisation and plan resources for participation (out of 27). However, the process is still challenging as decisions ultimately depend on the level of ambition (requirement of funds and scope) and the final decision on the type of partnership, including the related funding model³.

Do countries have elements in place to ensure meaningful participation throughout the life-cycle of Partnerships?

Participation in partnerships’ activities requires significant coordination effort – across the different ministries, funding agencies, as well as with regions and broader R&I stakeholders – in order to mobilise interest and funds, and to increase overall relevance. **Most countries are taking important steps to ensure appropriate governance and coordination framework** for managing their participation – twenty-five (out of 27) have already or plan to do that. Nonetheless, coordination to engage all relevant stakeholders, notably those outside the traditional research community, continues to be challenging for many countries. **The least progress has been made towards the monitoring and evaluation framework for national participation** in R&I partnerships. Eleven countries reported that they have carried out an evaluation or assessment of their national participation in partnerships in the past two years. Twenty-one countries have not yet decided whether to have a dedicated monitoring and evaluating of their national participation. There are several reasons for this, such as lack of clarity on what will be done in relation to data collection and monitoring and at what level (national, Commission/Forum, partnerships), limited access to partnership information and good quality data, lack of overview, coordination, and information exchange between major stakeholders, limited resources and political demand for monitoring and evaluation, as well as challenges in relation to evaluation itself (measuring impacts and the relevance of partnerships at national level). Finally, it should be taken into account that the ongoing Covid-19 crisis might have an impact on the overall preparation process at national level.

How do countries assess their progress?

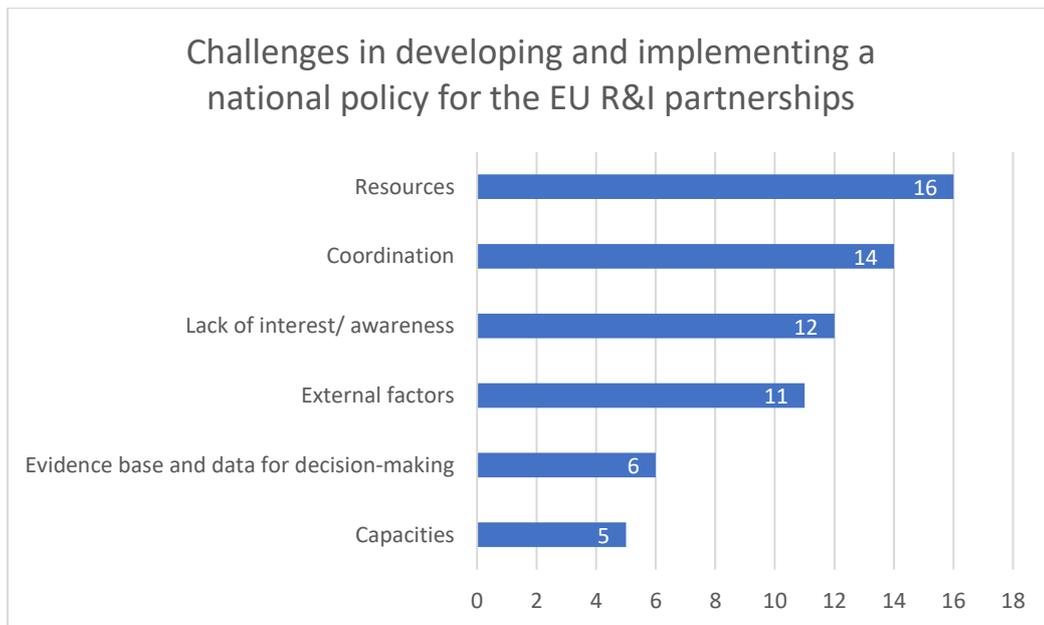
The majority of countries (17, including Belgium federal level and Flanders) rate their progress as **average**. This means having the main cornerstones in place, intervention areas identified, and/or general decision for a more coordinated approach taken. However, concrete implementation is still under discussion. Six countries (+ Belgium-Wallonia) rate their progress as **high**. These represent countries/ regions that already have a coordinated approach to some extent for participation in partnerships under Horizon 2020 and are highly motivated in participating in EU R&I partnerships. Four countries score their progress as **low** or very low, which is due to a lack of research priorities to guide participation, lack of interest and/or understanding of the need for having such mechanisms in place. The explanations are listed in **Annex IV**.

³ This can include for example: the co-funding rate, the calculation and validity of in-kind contributions, the eligibility/definition of national contribution and the possibilities to use ERDF for national participation.

What are the key challenges?

In the survey, countries were asked to identify **three most important challenges** in developing and implementing a national policy/ strategy for the EU R&I partnerships. The large majority of responses fell into six main categories: resources, capacities, coordination, lack of interest/ awareness, external factors, evidence-base and data for decision-making, capacities.

Figure 1. Key challenges for developing and implementing national policy for EU R&I Partnerships



Limited resources was most often identified as a barrier for participating in partnerships and implementing related policies at national level. Participation in partnerships on a systematic basis requires a lot of resources. Besides committing budgets, it is necessary to have people that process the policy documents, engage national stakeholders, develop positions, participate in meetings, disseminate results etc. It seems that this aspect is often underestimated in national contexts and persons dealing with partnerships have often many other parallel activities going on. Regarding financing, some countries find it challenging to provide long-term commitments, secure financial contributions from other ministries or funding bodies, or ensure the synergic use Cohesion policy funds for their participation.

Ensuring policy **coordination** was highlighted in fourteen responses as one of the most difficult challenges. Often this is due to **dispersed roles and responsibilities** within countries between the entities that have different interests and means, and/or lack of coordination between research and other ministries, as well as stakeholders from different sectors and regions. Many countries face the challenge of **developing or identifying an appropriate mechanism to engage** the various relevant players in the discussions and decision-making concerning participation in EU R&I partnerships. Some struggle with bringing together the two communities – partnerships with MS and those with industry, including KICs – under the same process. One response pointed out that a coordination problem is also due to the fragmentation of partnership governance at the EU level (between COM and MS; between MS; and between the different candidates for R&I partnerships).

Third, many countries face the challenge of **lack of interest and/ or low awareness** among stakeholders and high-level policymakers on the importance, opportunities and benefits from collaborating in EU R&I partnerships and their agendas. In some countries, the Framework Programme is still perceived more as a funding programme, rather than as an opportunity to grow and contribute to European objectives (one respondent expressed it succinctly as lack of European culture). Three responses also pointed to the complexity of the partnership landscape, including different functioning of the partnerships and rules for calls. All this makes it challenging to communicate potential benefits, raise the interest of relevant actors and involve them as active participants in international networks. Those with a bottom-up R&I system find it challenging to find rationale, drivers and convincing arguments to change the current approach to a more centralised one with a ring-fenced budget, allocated based on pre-set priorities and criteria. Such a change is seen as complex and resource intensive activity with little perceived benefits.

The fourth challenge relates to **external factors** that are not under the responsibility of Member States, but of the European Commission, comitology or partnership initiatives. Here, countries noted the **insufficient information** on how future partnerships will work, what will be the final form of partnerships, mode of operation, budgetary commitments needed, added value for countries in participating, possibilities for using Cohesion policy funds for the participation of countries and/or regions. Several countries underlined that the level of uncertainty on the rules for using ERDF inside European Partnerships slows down process at national level for involving regions. These “unknowns” constitute as important challenges for making decisions and committing budgets.

Six responses pointed to **insufficient data and evidence-base** that is especially important for making informed, policy-driven decisions and prioritise participation. Five countries reported challenges that are related to **weaknesses in R&I capacities** that impede effective participation, such as lack of knowledgeable / dedicated human staff, not enough innovation-oriented industry stakeholders, and over-reliance on ESI Funds compared to other sources.

Other replies pointed out the difficulty to increase **alignment** of national priorities, institutional funds of research performing organisation, regional and private sector to partnerships agendas. Also, **recurrent changes in policy** can impede the development of a national coordinated approach – partnerships require long-term planning, and commitments that would outlive the electoral cycles and changes in government. Moreover, proper **implementation** can be a challenge, i.e. developing an integrated approach to funding mechanisms that would incorporate the whole innovation chain from basic research to applied research. As one respondent concluded about the different challenges of coordination of national participation in EU R&I partnerships: ‘it is a long lasting and time-consuming process, during which it is difficult to maintain a high level of awareness, participation and reactivity from the stakeholders.

II Common guidance for ensuring national preparedness

What is the ideal situation?

The objective is formulated in the ERAC conclusions – that Member States and Associated countries would have in place the “*necessary measures at national level ensuring that their future participation in partnerships is accompanied by appropriate commitment and resources for the life cycle of initiatives, and a governance establishing stronger links with national policy priorities and end-users.*”

There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Countries have very different R&I systems, and each must define the most suitable mechanisms and actions. The survey results show clearly a broad variety of approaches with some countries adopting a more centralised policy, whilst others exploring how to integrate the necessary elements for participating in EU R&I partnerships in their existing (often dispersed) structures and policies, and improve the overall coordination. It is up to countries to further translate the guidance into country-specific and concrete actions.

Key takeaways from the analysis of national preparedness.

The preconditions for alignment and self-assessment tool developed in the context of the Mutual Learning Exercise remain relevant and solid reference for countries developing their national policies and mechanisms for improving alignment, increasing political commitment and participation in partnerships.

A good and realistic division of labour between the Commission and countries is important regarding foresight, stakeholder consultation processes, data sharing procedures, impact monitoring etc. Not all countries have a large pool of human resources available for such tasks.

It is important that the work load at national level stays manageable that is associated to priority-setting, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of partnerships. A clear approach from the Commission can help to structure the work at national/regional level. Member States and Associated Countries will also need sufficient time to organise themselves accordingly.

There is a need to better coordinate monitoring and evaluation efforts between the EU and its Member States (AC). There should be a clear and complementary division of tasks on *what* is being done at what level and *by whom* (countries, Commission/ Forum, Partnerships). It is important to base the monitoring efforts on data that is already being collected, using existing EU and national tools.

Continued guidance on the functioning of European Partnerships is needed. Early and concrete information from the Commission on the form, level of ambition, financing and governance arrangements is necessary for countries to assess inputs needed (including resources for national coordination) and take decisions regarding their participation in partnerships. There is a continued plea for more practical workshops, discussions, guidance and sharing good practices to address a variety of issues related to the implementation and governance of the Partnerships. This is also important for countries with currently low participation as it helps them in efforts to involve relevant stakeholders. The Policy Support Facility⁴ is considered as useful tool in this context (e.g. to promote mutual learning for measuring impact to policies and the society).

A weak point seems to be stakeholder involvement at national level (notably beyond the traditional R&I community) in shaping decisions concerning prioritisation, as well as in dissemination and communication activities. The ERAC conclusions emphasise that “coordination

⁴ <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/policy-support-facility>

with stakeholders should mainly take place at national level, (even though) they do not directly take part in the strategic coordinating process”¹. This puts an important responsibility for countries to make sure that the concerns and needs of their stakeholders are reflected in national inputs to prioritisation and agenda-setting. It is also a crucial aspect to address the challenge that many countries face related to low awareness of the EU R&I initiatives, as well as to increase buy-in, resource mobilisation, advocacy, and societal/ local relevance of participation.

An important precondition for developing synergies is the synchronisation of the timing and planning of programmes so as to ensure the ERDF are available in time for commitments to R&I partnerships co-funded from Horizon Europe. Also, it is important for Member States to have information what and how can be planned within the ERDF programme.

There are important transferable lessons to tackle the various challenges that countries can use as inspiration when designing their national processes (Table 2).

Table 2. Transferable lessons to address the key challenges identified by countries

Challenge	Examples of transferable lessons
1. Limited resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>For co-financing</u>: Engage sectoral ministries and other actors that invest in R&I. Enable the use of ERDF (see b. Funding and resources) c. <u>For implementing national process/ policy for partnerships</u>: integrate partnerships in the existing structures and mechanisms for decision-making, monitoring and evaluation (see examples in Box 3 and Box 6), while ensuring a general overview, as well as broader understanding of impacts, results and outcomes at partnership level.
2. Ensuring policy coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase efforts to facilitate discussion and knowledge exchange between the various actors involved in partnerships. The ‘lead’ organisation can facilitate the creation of platforms / governance processes that bring the relevant actors (e.g. ministries, funding agencies) together (Box 3). b. Delegate coordination where it makes sense (see Italy’s example concerning industry partnerships in Box 2)
3. Lack of interest/ awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No quick-fix solutions, but it is important to break out from small circles and ‘usual suspects’ in Partnerships through broad dissemination and stakeholder engagement. It can take different forms from formal to informal ones (e.g. Finnish stakeholder hearings, Box 4). Some countries have integrated partnership topic in their entrepreneurial discovery process related to RIS3 (see BE-Wallonia example, Box 3). It remains equally important to keep partnerships high on the political agenda as long as the first two challenges are not structurally dealt with.
4. Lack of data and evidence-base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To be addressed coherently as part of strategic coordinating process, in line with Horizon Europe provisions b. See also experiences with past evaluations, and ideas for developing future monitoring and evaluation system for partnerships (Monitoring and evaluation)
5. Weak R&I capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Knowledgeable staff on partnerships</u>: to be partially addressed as part of EU-level communication regarding partnerships. Explore also possibilities for strengthening National Contact Points (NCP) support with regards to partnerships. b. <u>Low participation</u>: Strengthen societal challenge/ applied research, as well as industry-academia collaboration, which has been implemented through national rules in countries such as Spain. An evident suggestion is also taking steps to use ERDF to support participation in partnerships. Several good practice examples exist for synergies at the programme level (Estonian Mobilitas+ Programme), and at project level (Romanian participation in ECSEL and Clean Sky).

Essential elements that need to be in place - what inputs are needed from countries?

It is important to consider changes in paradigm and approach to European Partnerships when developing or revising national policies regarding participation in EU R&I partnerships for the next programme period. In a related manner, there is a need to **identify the exact inputs/ actions that are needed from countries** so that they could build these considerations into upcoming national policies/planning and to respond to the European political priorities.

An overview of the functions, roles and responsibilities of the strategic coordinating process presented in a Commission discussion paper⁵ is used as a starting point to identify the types of inputs needed from countries in the overall process (Table 3). The planning should consider both the ‘selection’ as well as ‘implementation’ phase of European Partnerships.

The key element for the strategic coordinating process is to ensure a well-functioning monitoring and evaluation system for partnerships, with good quality data and necessary evidence base for political discussion. Besides allowing to promote and take stock of coherence, openness and transparency across initiatives, at the heart of this effort is to radically improve understanding of added value and impacts generated by partnerships – at the level of EU and its MS/AC. Improvement of the general understanding of the partnership approach, coupled with *foresight* efforts at international, EU and national level, would allow instilling a political culture for discussing portfolio development of partnerships, as well as de-prioritisation.

Table 3. Inputs / actions needed from countries in the context of the strategic coordinating process

	Strategic coordinating process	Indicative timing
Selection phase	Feedback to structured consultation on portfolio, including nomination of national contact points	May-Oct. 2020 (again in 2023)
	Expression of political commitment for participation and contributions	Sept. 2020
	Formal decisions for participation and overall commitments in the respective configurations (comitology, Council)	2021 (Q I-III)
Implementation phase	Inputs to biennial monitoring of partnerships (national contributions, outcomes and impact)	2021 (Q III), and prior to publishing subsequent monitoring reports
	Foresight process: Input on national political/ R&I priorities	2022
	National positions for DG level political discussions on the policy approach	Interim evaluation (2024)

The inputs needed from countries at the level of individual Partnerships depend on its form and governance, but there are some cross-cutting elements summarised in Table 4. During the selection phase active work takes place at the level of individual candidate to define priorities and design the programmes, to which interested countries need to ensure inputs and mobilise their respective stakeholders. During the implementation phase important work takes place at the level of programme owners to administer and manage the activities. With majority of future Partnerships

⁵ <https://www.era-learn.eu/documents/wk-14467-2018-init-en.pdf>

aiming at accelerating systemic ‘transitions’, it requires also a much more **proactive role of lead Ministries in their governance** to ensure links with policies and strong demand articulation.

Table 4. Inputs / actions needed from countries in the context of individual initiatives

	Individual R&I partnerships
Preparation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inputs to priorities and design of the initiative • Indicative commitments of financial and/or in-kind contributions • Mobilise national stakeholders
During the life-time of the initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme management • Input to annual agenda-setting/ programming • Ensuring synergies with national programmes and policies • Ensuring fulfilment of commitment and resourcing throughout the lifetime of the initiative • Identification of impacts at national level (including necessary data collection)

Next steps to ensure national preparedness

Countries:

Assess your country governance and coordination mechanisms related to EU R&I Partnerships in light of the types of inputs needed from countries (partnerships overall and per individual initiative). Do you have all the necessary building blocks to prioritise participation, ensure resources, relevance and commitment for the life-time of the initiatives? To improve the remaining bottlenecks, use the toolbox developed by the MLE Alignment (2017) and the cross-country analysis of national preparedness presented in the annex of this report. While doing the self-assessment, mobilise the relevant institutions and actors in addressing the gaps and developing the next steps. In case there is a critical mass of countries confronted with a specific challenge that require additional insights, initiate activities to support mutual learning (e.g. through the Policy Support Facility).

Ensure the monitoring and evaluation of your national participation, notably qualitative information and assessments to better understand impacts at national and local level (aggregated project level information will be provided by the Commission services, on the basis of data supplied by partnerships).

Improve engagement and communication with stakeholders and end-users. National coordination mechanisms for Partnerships might function as platforms for advocating more and broader engagement. Also, countries and entities preparing partnerships should act as multipliers and use their relevant organisations and channels to reach beyond the ‘usual suspects’.

The Commission/ Partnership Forum:

Optimise and coordinate the monitoring and evaluation efforts by ensuring/ facilitating good quality and comparable data in common database, improved evidence base and advancing methodologies for understanding better the impact of partnerships. Establish in cooperation with the Member States (/AC) a minimum set of common KPIs and standards for monitoring & evaluation of national participation in the EU R&I partnerships.

Ensure a highly visible communication via clear online information (such as contacts, visual maps, participation per types of actors), and **continued guidance** on the new approach and implementation of Partnerships.

Box 1. State of play on communication and guidance from the Commission regarding European Partnerships

The ‘Shadow’ Strategic configuration of the Horizon Europe Programme Committee (SPC) is currently the main entry point for the communication with Member States on horizontal/ strategic issues on the preparation of partnerships.

In November 2019, the Commission organised three workshops with Member States to discuss the future participation of MS in partnerships with industry (benefits, form etc.). The results are published in a [draft report](#). In January 2020 there was a training for the national delegates of the shadow SPC on the portfolio, functioning and preparation process of partnerships ([link to slides](#)). On 9-10 March ERA-LEARN and Commission Services organised a workshop to support the preparation of partnerships with MS participation ([link to report](#)). As a follow-up of this event, guidance is being prepared on the all topics discussed at the workshop.

Discussions and preparations are also ongoing at the level of individual initiatives where questions on e.g. financing, implementation and governance are being addressed. The level of involvement of national contact persons on these discussions has been uneven across partnerships.

Important next milestones for communication are an update of the partnerships section on the Horizon Europe website that will concentrate the information on partnerships. At the level of individual partnership candidates, meetings are taking place, as well as SRIA consultations. It is important that the contact persons responsible for these partnerships at national level would be active in participating in the meetings and/or engaging related national stakeholders.

Partnerships:

Ensure access to data. All European Partnerships will need to establish a monitoring system that can track progress towards objectives, impacts and key performance indicators. In order to simplify and standardise this at the level of the individual projects funded by the partnerships, the data on proposals, selected projects, their outcomes and results will need to be integrated in the central IT tools for Horizon Europe.

Ensure proper consultation and engagement during the agenda-setting to foster alignment and synergies. Several countries are increasing efforts to ensure alignment of national priorities, institutional funds of research performing organisation, regional and private sector to partnership agendas. For this to happen, partnerships need to reach beyond their immediate circle.

Annex I. Results of the survey

27 countries replied to the survey⁶. Belgium replies included individual responses on behalf of the Federal level, Flanders, The Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles and Walloon Region.

The chapter is structured according to the five dimensions that are considered as relevant for ensuring effective participation in EU R&I partnerships, and related governance structures. The chapters aim to better understand factors influencing national policies for partnerships, and identify common characteristics and transferrable lessons across these dimensions.

The questionnaire focused on future / upcoming policies, in view of the next programme period (2021+). In this context, it is important to take into account that many countries are currently in the midst of developing their strategies – several aspects are still under discussion and/or the input is subject to political decision⁷.

Selection phase

Priority setting and planning of national participation

The MLE Alignment identified two important **preconditions** for a national administration to engage in joint R&I initiatives addressing common challenges – incorporating an EU/ international cooperation element in the national R&I strategy and aligning of national strategies, instruments, resources and actors with the priorities of the Partnership⁸. The idea is that effective participation in partnerships requires alignment between the national R&I agendas and EU R&I programming.

Any administration that intends to engage in transnational R&I partnerships should include this dimension to their national R&I and/or sectoral strategies. **The vast majority of countries (25 out of 27) do or plan to include the EU/transnational R&I cooperation in their national policy.**

The survey results demonstrate clearly that there are multiple ways to address the internalisation aspects in national strategies. In this context, the assumption is that national R&I strategies focus more on horizontal or structuring aspects (ERA, internalisation of R&I etc.), while integration of EU/ transnational R&I collaboration in (cross-)sectoral strategies reflects stronger role of the sectoral policies and priorities. The **national R&I strategy** is the most relevant framework for almost everyone (21 countries). 16 countries plan to incorporate the EU/transnational dimension in the strategies of national R&I funding bodies, reflecting an **important role of funding agencies in priority-setting of partnerships**. The EU / transnational R&I cooperation dimension is included also more focused contexts – 15 countries plan to incorporate in their sectoral strategies, 13 countries in cross-sectoral strategies, and 12 countries in their Regional or National Smart Specialisation Strategy (identified through entrepreneurial discovery process).

In terms of *how* the EU/transnational R&I cooperation dimension will be incorporated in the national policy context, countries reported a variety of means. In 9 countries (out of 24), it will form **dedicated part(s) related to internationalisation** of R&I (e.g. supporting participation in EU and international programmes). 7 countries will take a more **sectoral** approach by integrating it in the

⁶ Luxembourg's responses have to be yet fully integrated to this Annex.

⁷ For example, in **Austria** it will be discussed in the context of the new Austrian RTI Strategy 2030, as part of the work of working group on EU missions and partnerships. **Sweden** is currently working on R&I bill where these considerations will be addressed. **Italy** is working on National Programme of Research PNR 2021-2027.

⁸ https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/report/MLE-AI_final%20report_KI-AX-17-010-EN-N.pdf , pp 14

thematic/challenges' sections of relevant strategies. Others have a mixed approach. For example, in **Belgium, Germany, France and Sweden** both approaches may co-exist depending on the topic. In **Germany and Norway** there is also a separate national strategy for international/EU cooperation that acts as an overarching policy document – In Germany it is called *[Internationalisation of Education, Science and Research](#)*, and in Norway it is the *[Strategy for research and innovation cooperation with the EU](#)*.

Ireland and Belgium have a strong emphasis at national level on **bottom-up R&I support**⁹, which poses limitations to developing a centralised, and/or strategic approach to EU partnerships. Another important element is that in the thematic priorities for countries relying on Cohesion Funds are largely **predetermined by smart specialisation strategies** (RIS3). In the case of **Greece**, partnerships would likely addressed in the national RIS3 strategy 2021-27 – as a dedicated part related to internalisation context, which constitutes horizontal dimension supporting all pillars of national RIS3.

Since the **scope** of the strategic coordinating process for partnerships involves all types of partnerships – public-public, as well as those with industry, it is important to understand whether countries also intend to give attention and **dedicated support to EU R&I partnerships with industry**. Responses were split, with 13 replying positively and 13 negatively. However, the majority of countries (even those that replied negatively) commented the value of strengthening industry-research links (at both the national and transnational levels) and that taking part in partnerships including industry is one of their serious considerations for the future.

From the open replies a pattern emerges with **countries that already have positive experience with participation in industry partnerships** under Horizon 2020, and that plan to **maintain/continue their support measures** (FI, AT, ES, NL, IT, FR. **Box 2**. Examples of mechanisms to support national participation in industry partnerships) and/or to take a **more strategic approach** in decisions regarding industry partnerships and their priority-setting (DE, NO). There are also **countries whose stakeholders have not been engaged in partnerships with industry so far, but want to change that** by giving increased emphasis and dedicated support to priority areas (BG, CY, EE, HR, HU, PL, PT, LUX). Additionally, some countries consider also important to continue efforts to **strengthen cooperation between industry and academia**, which is an important precondition for their companies to participate in EU R&I initiatives.

Box 2. Examples of mechanisms to support national participation in industry partnerships

Spain – National Institute of Health Carlos III (ISCIII)¹⁰ incentivises the inclusion of Spanish industries in transnational consortia – the beneficiaries could apply for extra 50000 EUR if a Spanish company is also a partner in the transnational project. Spanish Innovation Agency (CDTI) incentivises the participation of Spanish companies in public-private partnerships with the same instruments as in regular calls, and the participation of large companies in Joint Undertakings with an specific instrument.

Italy – provides support to National Technological Clusters to become sectorial coordinator of collaborative initiatives, including partnerships.

⁹ A bottom-up approach can mean that: i) R&I funding instruments are under the responsibility of and managed fully by the funding agencies; ii) no ring-fenced budgets for certain topics / thematic preferences (financing decisions are driven by applicants, are done case-by-case manner).

¹⁰ <https://eng.isciii.es/eng.isciii.es/Paginas/Inicio.html>

To conclude, most countries do not face obstacles in incorporating the EU R&I collaboration aspect in their national strategies. There is a variety of approaches and strategies for integrating the transnational R&I collaboration element, including participation in partnerships. An increasing number of countries incorporate industry partnerships in their policy considerations.

Criteria

An effective selection and prioritisation process for partnerships entails the existence of systematic **criteria** for decision-making. Twenty two (out of 27) countries plan to develop or update the criteria for prioritising national participation in EU R&I partnerships. Six countries plan to develop completely new criteria. 18 countries + BE- Walloon Region and BE-Flanders regions elaborated on their first ideas for these criteria, which are summarised in the table below.

Table 5. First indication of ideas/ features for criteria (most common ones) for deciding on participation in European Partnerships

	AT	BE-WL	BE-FL	CY	DK	EE	FI	FR	DE	EL	HU	LT	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	SK	SI	ES
Relevance / alignment with policies and priorities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
National R&I strengths, capacities and critical mass	X	X		X	X					X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
Budget and resources	X	X	X		X		X	X	X						X				X	X
Past participation		X	X	X			X		X				X				X	X		X
Societal aspects / impact	X						X			X								X		
Interest / input from national R&I community		X	X		X		X							X						

Table 5 shows that there are a lot of commonalities among countries concerning parameters for deciding their participation. *Relevance to policies and priorities* was by far the most popular response. It can refer to several interconnected ideas, such as contribution to the goals of the Government, contribution to the UN sustainable development goals, existence of national / institutional R&I plan in the given area (e.g. Antimicrobial Resistance), alignment with national, sectoral, and /or smart specialisation strategies and objectives. For example, in **France** prioritization will be also based on the forthcoming “*Pacte Productif 2025*”. In **Greece**, an important selection criterion is alignment to the priorities of the national RIS3 and/or other sectoral strategies. In the past, decisions have often been made on the basis on interest and relevance for national R&I community. So it is a major positive shift that so many countries use policy relevance as a criterion.

The second most commonly considered criteria is *national R&I strengths, capacities and critical mass*, e.g. excellence in the field, existence of industry and users. The third most chosen feature (or sometimes even constraint) for deciding participation is *budget and resource considerations*, which may refer to availability of funds, as well as national financial commitment. Fourthly, *past participation and experience* is applied as a criterion that may refer to two ideas – areas of success in the Framework Programme overall and/or experience and commitments in the context of previous partnerships (ERA-NETs, Art.185 initiatives etc.). Four countries consider *societal aspects / impact* as an important criterion for decision-making. This may refer to the needs of society, inclusion of the humanities, social and cultural sciences, research-based involvement of civil society, or impact on economy, society and environment. Five countries/ regions highlight the *interest / input of national R&I community* as a relevant criterion.

Other ideas include: efficient use of resources and integration aspects, such as standardization, regulation and procurement and interaction with the respective actors (mentioned by Austria), EU added value compared to national measures (Germany), possible synergies with other R&I financial instruments (Slovenia), emerging and transdisciplinary research field - possibly wanting to try / find new areas of excellence (Finland), opportunities for internalisation in national strategic issues (Spain), and integration in the European value chains (BE-Wallonia).

Four countries do not plan to develop or update criteria to prioritise national participation in partnerships. **Bulgaria, Czechia and Slovenia** already use some considerations as summarised above, notably levels of interest and capacity from the national community, compatibility with national priorities and availability of resources. Also, **BE-Flanders** has also just developed new criteria and will not develop anything new, but is open for refining and improving them based on first experiences and lessons-learned. **Poland** will use the RIS3 methodology for defining their interests and depending on the situation they will consider introducing new/ additional criteria.

The role and importance of priority setting, in terms of which partnerships to participate, varies from country to country. Priority-setting is more important to those with smaller administrations and/or limited resources/ capacities. Larger countries, such as **France** have an interest to participate in most partnerships, although alignment with national growth strategy and budget considerations will have to be taken into account. Development of criteria also depends on past participation – those that have little experience / low participation do not see the need to develop separate processes and criteria for decision-making.

Besides alignment and criteria, several countries are also reviewing their decision-making and prioritisation mechanisms. For example, **Netherlands** is looking into how to better **link sectoral ministries in decisions** concerning participation in partnerships. Estonia has worked on **ensuring the policy relevance and commitment** in selecting priorities. Belgium and Italy's approach underlines the importance of **ensuring inputs from stakeholders** (Box 3).

Box 3. Efforts in developing more responsive/participatory decision-making for partnerships

Netherlands is currently exploring mechanisms to integrate decision-making and prioritising participation in EU partnerships in relevant existing national funding structures, to better link research funding agencies, research communities and sectoral ministries in decision-making and funding concerning partnerships in order to improve alignment with national policies and research agendas.

Estonia - The document [*Strategic framework for Estonia's participation in the research, development and innovation partnerships of the European Union*](#) regulates participation in the partnerships. The main selection criteria is alignment and complementarity with national strategies. For the new period, priorities for partnerships have been selected at the highest level with the decision of the prime minister's advisory body.

Italy – Prioritisation will be one of the features of the interministerial coordination process supported by the consultation of national stakeholders.

Belgium-Wallonia – The on-going update of the regional Smart Specialisation Strategy will consider the European priorities and the societal challenges that Europe has defined in Horizon Europe Pillar 2. In 2018 regional working groups reflecting the Horizon clusters were set up, composed of universities, research centres, industry, SMEs, competitiveness centres and clusters, National Contact Points. The prioritisation of participation in partnerships will consider the input of these stakeholders.

Funding and resources

The availability of flexible funding, as well as human resources have been identified in the MLE Alignment as key preconditions for participation in EU R&I partnerships¹¹. It underlines the importance of planning adequate resources and flexible budgets for national participation.

22 countries (out of 27) plan/have dedicated **resources** for participation in EU R&I partnerships. **The responsibilities for the budgets** is almost equally split among the Ministry of Research/Research Council (20), other sectoral ministries/agencies (16) and under the Ministry of Innovation (13). Ten countries (AT, BG, DE, FR, PL, PT, NO, EE, NL, and UK) chose all three options indicating that allocation of budgets/funding is distributed and under the remit of each organisation. For five countries (SI, IT, ES, HR and LUX) funding is under the responsibility of Ministry of Research/ Research Council, as well as sectoral ministries/ agencies. In the case of **Spain** funding is mainly under the responsibility of the Ministry of Science and Innovation, and executed by funding agencies (AEI, CDTI, ISCIII). In the case of **Italy**, funding is also under the responsibility of regional authorities. In **Sweden**, on the other hand, the responsibility lies with the Ministry responsible for research/ Research Council, as well as Ministry responsible for innovation/ Innovation Council. There are also cases where responsibility lies in regional authorities (IT, ES) or the Bundesländer (DE). Thus, it can be said that in most cases, the **funding responsibilities are distributed** between different organisations/ research funding agencies. Only in four countries (Finland, Lithuania, Greece and Czech Republic) funding is under the responsibility of one organisation. In Finland, for example it is under the National Funding Agency. In Greece funding is under the responsibility of the General Secretariat for Research and Technology that is responsible for both research and innovation.

The reasons for not having or planning dedicated resources for participation include ongoing discussions on general budget planning or operational programmes. In Ireland and Belgium-Flanders it is due to their bottom-up R&I systems that do not foresee ‘earmarked budgets’ for predefined topics and funding agencies/ ministries allocate funding once such activity or need is determined (although Flanders highlights that there may be dedicated budget for ‘horizontal’ aspects, e.g. to cover membership fees).

One respondent replied that a successful future policy would require also a central funding for partnerships (complementing the funding of agencies) that can be used in a flexible way according to overall determined priorities and an overarching longer-term strategy. Another response, on the contrary, sees no added value in allocating dedicated resources to partnership-related activities and prefers to maintain a bottom-up approach driven by interest of R&I community.

There is a strong interest in using European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), as well as European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and European Social Funds for participation in EU partnerships and 16 countries are looking into this. Synergies with ERDF is seen as a key facilitator in entering partnerships (especially those with high dependence of R&I funding on Cohesion Funds), as well as for aligning national and European strategies and priorities. Many countries are still in **early stages of planning** with ongoing discussions with regional/managing authorities. **Countries/ regions are working on a number of fronts to make synergies happen:** identifying priorities for the RIS3, clarifying operational issues, and analysing the financial rules and provisions

¹¹ Pp 16-17

on combination of funds. Several countries explore the possibilities to include provisions in the smart specialisation strategies and operational programmes that would allow supporting partnership co-funding and/or covering membership fees. An important **pre-condition** for using Cohesion Funds for participation in EU R&I initiatives is identifying this during the programming of ERDF (as enabling conditions, in partnership agreements, operational programmes, and smart specialisation strategies). Other key elements, identified by countries, for enabling the use of ERDF include: simplification of rules (including state aid), legal clarity/ certainty for combining funds and adequate support from the Commission (both, DG R&I and REGIO).

Implementation phase

Participation in EU R&I partnerships is not simply co-funding transnational R&I projects, but about jointly addressing global challenges. This requires good coordination, governance and sufficient resources to participate in the different levels of governance for EU R&I partnerships to ensure meaningful participation in the programming phase, activities, and dissemination/ communication of results. Several countries have already established national coordination under Horizon 2020 / national ERA roadmaps for joint programming, but the changed political landscape under Horizon Europe (notably cluster-based approach in Pillar II), including the reform of the approach to partnerships forces countries to re-evaluate the current structures. In this context, it is important to understand how the new reality will be reflected in the national governance and coordination.

Coordination and governance

The idea is that an effective national participation in partnerships, as well as strategic coordinating process, requires appropriate governance structures and coordination mechanisms that would allow countries to take stock of their participation, impacts, relevance and ensure continued commitment at the highest level.

The picture that emerges is encouraging. The majority of countries (25 out of 27) have or plan to establish a mechanism to coordinate their national participation in the EU/transnational R&I collaborations, including partnerships. Eleven countries (SE, NL, EL, EE, NO, ES, PT, IE, FR, DE, CY) already do have a mechanism to coordinate national participation in the EU/transnational R&I collaborations, while thirteen more (FI, DK, LT, AT, SK, IT, HR, HU, PL, MT, CZ, CY, BG, LUX) plan to have a new one in the future.

In six countries (FI, LT, SK, HR, DE, LUX) this coordination mechanism is or will take the form of an **inter-ministerial committee**. In five other countries (BE, BG, CZ, CY, HU) a more **informal form** (‘a coordination forum’) is used or will be established. **France, Italy, Netherlands, and Norway** marked both options – interministerial committee and coordination forum – indicating a **multi-level national coordination and governance system**. For example, **Norway** has inter-ministerial committees, where also research funding organisations participate. In addition to this, the research Council of Norway provides advice and coordination with relevant stakeholders. In the **Netherlands**, coordination and facilitation is done by the Ministries of Science and Economic affairs, with the responsibility for decision-making lying at the sectoral Ministry level in close collaboration with National Research funders. Other possible forms are summarised in Box 4. In **Austria** and **Malta** the exact form of the new mechanism is subject to discussion and political decision.

*Box 4. Examples of other forms to coordinate participation*Existing:

Greece – In house Advisory Committee of the General Secretariat for Research and Technology

Ireland – A high-level group consisting of representatives of research funding agencies and Ministries

Portugal – A national distributed (cross-sectorial) network for the promotion and mobilisation of participation

Spain – An internal committee composed of representatives from the Ministry of Science and Innovation funding organisations (as part of national ERA Roadmap), as well as a separate inter-ministerial committee.

New:

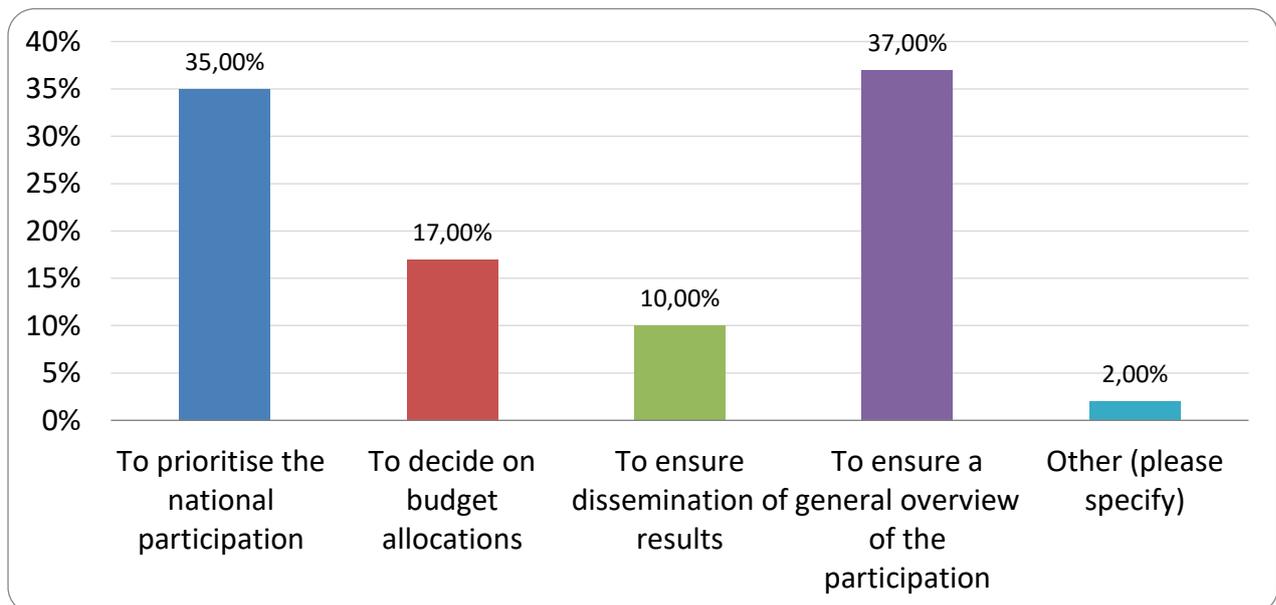
Italy – An inter-ministerial consultation and coordination body is foreseen to support the participation to R&I Partnership and the implementation of the measures introduced by the National Programme of Research PNR2021-2027.

Sweden – Interagency coordination based on the research bill and governmental decisions

Poland – plans to use their main funding agency (that hosts also the NCPs) to develop such a structure.

The main purpose of such mechanism is to ensure a general overview of the participation (chosen by 23 countries) and prioritise the national participation (chosen by 22 countries). In far less cases (chosen by 11 countries) the main purpose also includes decision-making on budget allocations. One reason for this is that in several countries it is the ministries that finance research within their remits and thus have a final say for deciding to commit to a partnership. Dissemination of results is considered as a purpose for the mechanism only by 6 countries. One country added that it uses the coordination/ governance mechanism to receive input to the content of the partnerships from relevant stakeholders (**Figure 2. Purpose of the mechanism to coordinate national participation**).

Figure 2. Purpose of the mechanism to coordinate national participation



In most cases the **leadership** in coordinating the implementation of partnership is in the ministry responsible for research/innovation (15 countries answered yes). In **Estonia** and **Lithuania** the Research Council is in the lead, and in **Poland** and **Bulgaria** it is the Innovation Agency. **Hungary**, **Sweden**, **Norway** and **Luxemburg** have shared leadership between ministries and funding/innovation agencies.

Box 5. Example of Norway's coordination structure, and distribution of roles

The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) has the overall responsibility for national participation in partnerships, but all ministries finance research within their remits. The MER has established cluster groups to discuss and prioritize the national engagement in partnerships. Funding from all ministries is channelled through the Research Council of Norway (RCN) who is running R&I programmes and activities on behalf of the ministries. Parts of the funding from the various ministries are used as national input in partnerships today. RCN has 15 boards in charge of the total RCN budget and portfolio. The partnership portfolio is seen as part of the national portfolio, and the 15 boards all have responsibility for the internationalisation of their portfolio. The national coordination of participation in partnerships has to respect the different ministries overall goals and decisions related to their funding.

Since future partnerships will be larger in size and more cross-cutting, it is important to understand **how countries cope with the new paradigm**, including the need to work across silos. The survey inquired explicitly if countries plan mechanisms to coordinate in the context of individual or several partnerships in related thematic area to ensure coordinated inputs to agenda-setting, dissemination of results, etc.

Fifteen countries plan to have coordination mechanism for each partnership and/or partnership area. **Finland**, **Netherlands**, **Hungary**, **Poland** and **Luxemburg** plan to have a coordination group per cluster / area. **Netherlands**, **Norway**, **France** and **Belgium** plan to arrange such coordination (groups) both at the level of individual partnerships, as well as at the level of clusters (e.g. following

the system of Horizon Europe programme committees for Pillar II). The **Netherlands**, for example, plans to extend the remit of the national delegations in the thematic PC configurations to also incorporate and exchange information concerning the relevant partnerships (and missions) for their clusters. **France** has already established these thematic coordination bodies at the level of individual partnerships and in some cases at cluster level. **Estonia** plans to delegate coordination to the respective agency / organisation participating in the partnership. In **Austria, Germany and Malta** the form of cooperation is still being discussed/ not yet decided.

Several **challenges** exist for setting up a coordination mechanism for EU R&I partnerships with limited human and financial resources being the most common one (21 positive replies). This is followed by the fact that responsibility is divided between different Ministries/Agencies at national level, sometimes with no clear leadership (15 positive replies). For four countries establishing a coordination mechanism is challenging due to low participation and/or limited interest of potential stakeholders (e.g. ministries, R&I community) in partnerships. Other challenges include, for example: complex funding structured combining different levels, a centralised system and/or the small size of the country with the responsibility for participation mainly lying in one Ministry/agency, limited number of potential actors in partnerships due to the small size of national ecosystem, a bottom-up model for participation, researcher/funding agency-led approach.

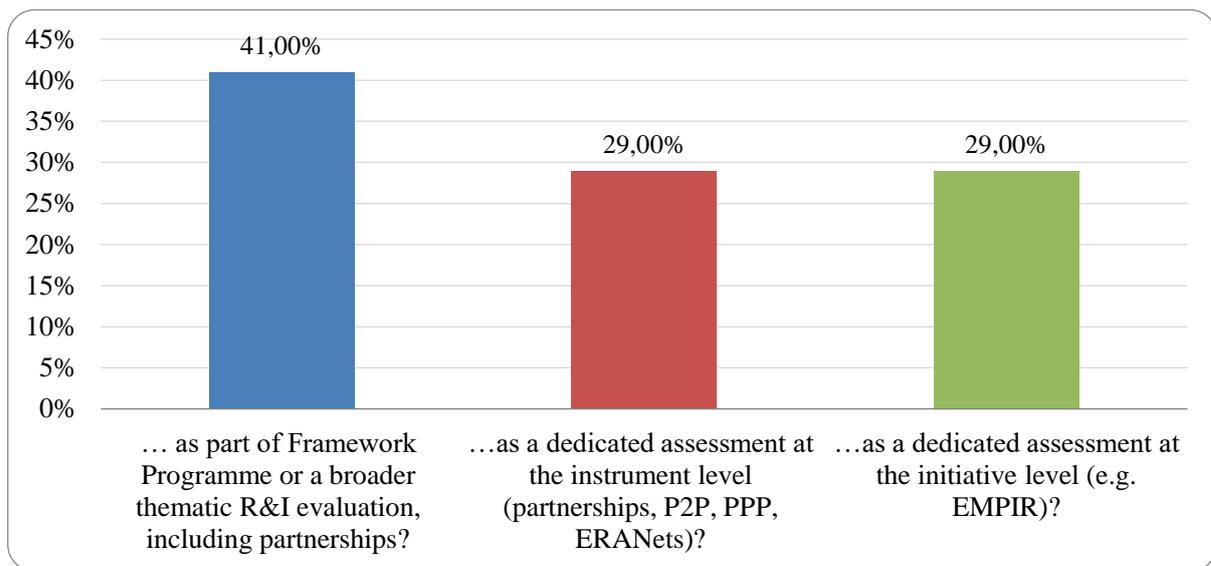
Monitoring and evaluation

Increasing the benefit of national participation in partnerships and making informed decisions on participation requires a systematic monitoring and better understanding of impacts at various levels. In particular, it is important to better understand and increase the impact on policies at EU, national and local level. This would allow to broadly disseminate and communicate the results and outcomes of the partnerships and their supported projects.

Whilst large part of data collection and monitoring will be done at the central level (EU, partnerships), countries still need to take care of monitoring and evaluating their national participation – notably to gather qualitative information and assessments to better understand impacts, as well as improving understanding of qualitative impacts of partnerships at national level.

The survey asked countries about past effort in assessing national participation to identify good practices. Evaluation and impact assessment of the national participation in partnerships were carried out in the last 2 years altogether in 11 countries (FI, LT, AT, NL, EE, IT, NO, DE, CZ, BE, CY). Most have evaluated their participation as part of the Framework Programme or a broader thematic R&I evaluation. Some countries have also carried out a dedicated assessment at the instrument level (P2P, PPP, ERA-Nets), while some have done or plan a dedicated assessment of individual partnerships (**Figure 3**. Evaluations of national participation in Partnerships may take different shape³). The **Netherlands**, for example, evaluates partnerships that receive national co-funding through a budget article from the ministry in charge every five years. The Dutch participation in Eurostars and ECSEL is currently under evaluation, covering aspects like target group reach, efficiency and impact.

Figure 3. Evaluations of national participation in Partnerships may take different shape



Countries are equally looking into outcomes and impacts at the level of supported projects, as well as the partnership as a whole. In addition, the purpose has been to better understand the impact of the R&I programme or whether the participation has led to more R&D investment and international R&D cooperation of participants. Evaluations are currently in process in **Cyprus** and **Estonia**. See [Annex III](#). Publicly accessible links to past evaluations and their results for publicly accessible evaluation results.

These evaluations have helped improve prioritisation in EU partnerships' participation through evidence-based decision making (8 countries replied positively), increase visibility of the EU partnerships among national stakeholders and/or policy-makers (5 replies). Few countries (3 replies) found that this has helped to strengthen participation in the EU partnerships. In **Netherlands**, the evaluation results have shown that companies invest more in R&D and international cooperation through partnerships. In **Spain**, the results have shown that although partnerships are very good to internationalize national research and achieve the European Research Area, the number of projects supported and their level of funding is low compared to national or EU classical projects.

Looking into the **future plans** concerning monitoring and evaluation, the majority of countries (21 out of 27) have **not yet decided** whether to have a dedicated monitoring and evaluating system for national participation in EU R&I partnerships. Five countries – **Austria, Estonia, Spain, Portugal and Poland** – plan to do so. In **Austria** the question is being discussed as part of the upcoming strategy. **Estonia** has launched a study to assess their existing strategic framework for partnerships, focusing on questions related to improved monitoring and data collection. **Spain** is developing its information system for science, technology and innovation (SICTI) to also include data from eCORDA to facilitate monitoring and assessment of international initiatives at national level. In **Italy, France, Finland and Poland** monitoring and/ or evaluation of national participation are addressed through **existing structures and mechanisms**, as part of the remit of existing agencies and organisations (**Box 6**. Example of plans for integrating the monitoring and assessment of participation in partnerships to existing mechanisms / structures). In these cases monitoring and evaluation addresses the level of projects rather than the programme level. Several countries express openness to carry out additional evaluations for specific purposes, and/or to support the monitoring of European Partnerships.

Box 6. Example of plans for integrating the monitoring and assessment of participation in partnerships to existing mechanisms / structures

Italy – Under the responsibility of the National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes (ANVUR), the [Research Quality Assessment \(VQR\)](#) is an exercise aiming to provide an up-to-date assessment of the state of research in the various scientific fields, in order to promote the improvement of research quality in the assessed institutions and to allocate the performance-based share of the institutional funding of the Italian university and research system. The VQR, whose aim is to evaluate the research outcomes of public universities and research institutes (as well as those of private institutions that voluntarily submit their research outcomes for evaluation) is the candidate for including among its features the monitoring and assessment of indicators referring to all R&I Partnership's performance. Even though the full VQR is carried out every five years, intermediate assessment exercises supporting the EP monitoring process might be foreseen. Data collection and elaboration will also be performed by the Ministry Bureau of Statistics and an ad-hoc mechanism will be used to complete the results and produce a comprehensive monitoring report.

France – The national coordination mechanisms that allow to share information and to make sure that decisions are taken based on available data. Also, the annual report from the National Agency for Research (ANR) includes a state-of-play of its participation in public-public partnerships.

In **Finland** – The obligatory final reports provided by the Finnish project partners will be analysed by their funding agencies

In **Poland** – the monitoring and evaluation of partnerships will be in the remit of the National Centre for R&D (main funding agency for innovation) that is their new NCP coordinator.

To sum up, monitoring and evaluation seems to be a particularly ambiguous and challenging topic for many countries with of them still undecided as to how to integrate this in their national R&I policy/ system. The **challenges** can be grouped as follows:

- i. **Limited access to partnership information and good quality data** on participation and the related investments from different sources. Access to current and up to date data is very limited and collection of complete and uniform data would be difficult and resource intensive. A related challenge is limited access to EU -level data, such as key objectives and deliverables of partnerships. Access to data on EIT was also mentioned as a challenge.
- ii. **Lack of overview, coordination, and information exchange between major stakeholders.** Often partnerships fall under the individual responsibilities of different entities at national level (e.g. sectoral ministries, participating agencies, regional funders). Data is available only partially (e.g. for partnerships with public/ national contributions). In some countries / regions there is no central data repository that would allow overview on participation in partnerships.
- iii. **Limited resources** (time, personnel, money, capacities)
- iv. **Limited political demand for monitoring and evaluation.** Lack of urgency, limited political demand, lack of understanding the importance of data-driven decision-making among superiors, lack of evaluation culture among policy-makers.
- v. **Challenges in relation to evaluation itself:** large number of small-scale projects across various different thematic areas, no methodology on impact assessment, different target group have different expectations regarding the impact, measuring (long-term) impacts and added value / relevance of partnerships at national level.
- vi. **Low participation** in partnerships.

Concerning monitoring and evaluation, several countries underline the importance of ensuring **clarity, efficiency and complementarity** of *what is being done at what level* (national, EU, partnership) and *by whom* (Commission/Forum, partnerships). For instance, it is important to consider **what data to collect at what level** – in some cases it may make more sense to collect data at the partnership level to ensure consistency and completeness. In addition, it is important to **base the monitoring on data that is already being collected, using existing EU and national tools**. The monitoring carried out in the context of the Forum, as well as individual partnerships are particularly important in this context. Finally, it is important to **raise awareness about the necessity of such monitoring/evaluation** among other stakeholders. To overcome methodological challenges, there should be more exchange of best practices in monitoring and evaluation, as well as improved evidence based, elaborated reports, including data and results from the Commission.

Building blocks for the EU-level support and guidelines

In the survey, countries were asked to identify building blocks for EU-level guidelines on the design and implementation of national governance structures and monitoring & evaluation mechanisms for EU R&I partnerships. Overall, countries supported the building blocks proposed in the survey.

Table 6. Support to building blocks proposed in the survey by survey respondents

Building blocks proposed in the survey	No. ticks
Best practice examples for coordination mechanisms and monitoring & evaluation systems	20
Detailed explanations of resources needed, types of contributions etc.	20
Detailed explanations of different partnership models	19
Presenting efficient tools for decision-making processes, involvement of stakeholders, funding and other support measures	19
Minimum set of common KPIs for monitoring & evaluation of national participation in the EU R&I partnerships	18
Minimum standards for establishing national coordination mechanisms/recommendations on national coordinating mechanisms	16
Minimum standards for establishing monitoring & evaluation systems	16

Other proposals include:

- i. Guide /manual regarding **synergies** – how to use European Regional Development Funds (incl. Interreg) for participation in European Partnerships
- ii. Clear **online** information – visual maps of benefits of partnerships, their different mechanisms, contacts
- iii. Guidelines on the **functioning and implementation of partnerships** – e.g. their governance, on national commitment
- iv. Information / best practice examples on participation opportunities according to **types of participants** – how to prepare and engage: local/regional/governmental entities, industry/private sector?
- v. Guidelines, best practice examples, useful tools on **foresight** – how to organise a complementary and not too burdensome foresight mechanism for partnerships?

Annex II. Summary descriptions of country's intentions regarding partnership preparation, implementation and monitoring

Finland	Our intention is to participate actively in preparation of the numerous partnerships. National support structure (including NCPs) will be enhanced to better respond to the needs of all the potential applicants. Special attention will be given to analyse statistical information to utilise them better in national planning and decision-making.
United Kingdom	Participation in Partnerships is currently being assessed. Currently there is no central monitoring activity for Partnerships.
Sweden	We have an organisation for monitoring of all national EU participation set up today at the innovation Agency Vinnova and an interagency organisation for EU partnerships. We plan to extend and develop these functions further to include the new tasks. We may need to set up a more top-down organisation of steering these functions.
Denmark	Denmark is in the middle of a process of prioritisation among the suggested 49 partnerships involving relevant stakeholders. It is expected that most of the partnerships in Horizon Europe with Danish participation will be financed and administered/ monitored by the Danish Innovation Fund and a few by sectorial ministries.
Lithuania	Lithuania plans to join partnerships with assessment of country priorities, initiative of sectoral ministries and research potential in specific areas of partnerships. The Ministry organized meetings with other ministries, the Lithuanian Research Council and will shortly prepare guidelines for Lithuania's participation in the partnerships. It is hoped that sectoral ministries will be more involved in this process.
Austria	In the context of the development of the new Austrian RTI Strategy 2030, five thematic working Groups have been established in 2019. One working group has been dedicated to „EU Missions and EU Partnerships”. Its objective is to develop a proposal for an overall strategic process for the selection and monitoring of the Austrian participation in Missions and Partnerships. This strategic process shall be widely agreed upon by Austrian RTI stakeholders and shall include concrete proposals for fields of action.
Slovakia	Currently analysing the priorities, critical mass and relevant partners on the national level. Crucial condition will be the support of the synergies - financial contributions from ESIF according to the Article 8 of the Horizon Europe regulation
Slovenia	Preparation: November 2019 Government decision document where (1) gov. is notified about H-EU partnerships, (2) gov. has assigned Ministry of education, science and sport as coordinator for H-EU partnerships, (3) gov. has ordered other ministries to get involved with partnerships within their financial capabilities Implementation: Our Ministry will be able 'to take' 5-7 partnerships Monitoring: only for Art. 185 and ERA-NETs - yearly reporting as prerequisite for the payment of funds.
Netherlands	Internationalisation is an important part of our national strategies. The overall coordination is much more developed compared to earlier years. However, choice about actual participation, roles and budget will remain up to the sectoral ministries and their agencies or research funders, as well as monitoring the impact of their participation. We are currently exploring mechanisms to integrate decision making and prioritising participation in EU-partnerships in relevant existing national funding structures.
Greece	At this stage we envisage participation in a limited number of partnerships on areas of national priority. Selection will be made following: i) Initial open consultation, ii) Targeted consultation in line with the entrepreneurial, iii) discovery process for updating our National RIS 3 Strategy (2021-2027), iv) Advice from the National Research, Technology and Innovation Council, v) Advice from National Representatives to the Program Committees. Yet there is no established monitoring mechanism apart from the mandatory verification /audit procedures for the on-going projects.
Estonia	We intend to develop the current participation framework further so that it would reflect all the partnerships Estonian ministries are involved (not only FP partnerships). However, the process of selecting the partnerships will remain the same (the main criteria is the

	alignment and complementarity with national strategies). The process of analysing the participation and impact of the partnerships is in the process. After piloting, we can start to enhance the system.
Italy	Italy is willing to take appropriate measures to contribute to the EU coordination and to support and fund the national participation to EU R&I Partnerships, e.g.: i) a permanent inter-ministerial consultation and coordination, ii) ad-hoc funding instruments, iii) simplification of rules and reduced administrative burdens for funders and participants, iv) monitoring and impact assessment by means of an ad-hoc mechanism based on the periodic evaluation of research institutes (VQR) complemented by the work of the Ministry Bureau of Statistics.
Norway	Norway participates actively in preparation of the new partnerships of Horizon Europe, and will consider participation when launched. We are establishing national procedures for decision on participation, and consider it important to prioritize our engagements. The monitoring of partnerships will be follow nationally established procedures for research and innovation projects.
Spain	The preparation and implementation is part of the activities coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Innovation with the above-mentioned funding agencies and sectoral ministries. Lack of coordination from some of the candidate partnerships proposal teams and the Commission sectoral units during the preparatory phase of the partnerships and no information on funding requirement nor level of the general commitments envisaged by the Commission is hampering the process at national level. The budgetary dimension partnerships during HE will have a direct impact on the current national instruments thus, it is essential to have a clear position of the EU in respect to using cohesion funds to support partnerships.
Portugal	We have been preparing and are implementing a structured approach to Partnership participation with the involvement of the relevant ministries and national actors. It is envisaged that we will have a centralised monitoring for national participation
Ireland	Ireland's approach to Partnerships is very much bottom-up. Our national research funders and research performing bodies determine if participating in a particular partnership is suitable to meeting their strategic objectives and desired impacts. There is no specific central co-ordination of participation in or membership of any European partnerships, although there are examples where different funding agencies have engaged in co-funds together. Due to this bottom-up approach, there is currently no national monitoring of Irish engagement and participation in EU R&I partnerships.
Croatia	Preparation process is focused on engaging sectoral ministries and key national bodies e.g. Chamber of commerce, Thematic innovation councils etc. to disseminate information and mobilize possible participants for partnerships in the new Programme. So far participation of Croatian organisations in European partnerships has been very limited, primarily in ERA-NET. Hence, the first objective of our Ministry is to increase awareness and prepare relevant ministries to launch co-financing schemes through their allocations from ESI funds to increase participation.
Hungary	More coordinated approach and increased involvement is expected in Hungary for Horizon Europe partnerships. In the preparatory phase dedicated communication channels have been set up with the responsible sectoral ministries and on the longer run an interministerial coordinatory platform will be established to ensure alignment with national and sectoral strategies. At the moment the monitoring activities of our national participation in R&I Partnerships are limited to data collection for programmes with national contribution (ECSEL, EUROSTARS, AAL and ERA-NETs)
Poland	We see the Partnerships operating under renewed mandate as an effective tool for increasing impact of research and way of increasing our participation (especially industrial one) in the Horizon Europe activities. We are in process of preparing the monitoring activities in this area, therefore participating in the WG as an excellent learning opportunity.
France	We already have mechanisms for national coordination on partnerships, through different bodies, involving ministries, RFOs (mainly ANR) and RPOs (incl. universities). For

	partnerships with private partners, we have regular exchanges between relevant ministries and involved industrial sectors. We have a strong interest on partnerships and it is likely that French actors will be involved in most of them, we also have an interest in coordinating several of them. The process for prioritisation and selection of partnerships is notably based on the assessment of the current participation.
Malta	Malta actively participated in the consultation process that the CION led as part of the Strategic Plan. MCST is currently assessing which steps to take to progress from the expression of preliminary interest of Ministries, into a confirmed intention to take part in specific Partnerships. Once commitments are established in terms of participation, MCST will have a clearer indication as to the exact intentions vis-a-vis the implementation aspect of the EU R&I Partnerships. It has not been decided yet how monitoring will take place, as it is still too early in the partnership process.
Germany	Germany considers the European Partnerships as of high value and will continue to be a strong partner in many partnerships. They are to be considered an important tool for coping with the profound transformation in economies and societies and for gaining more resilience and European competitiveness in times of deep changes on world markets with monopolies rising. Partnerships contribute to strengthening the ERA. They promote collaboration and mutual understanding of European funders, which contributes e.g. to harmonization of standards in Europe and beyond.
Czechia	The Czech Republic is closely monitoring the preparation of European Partnerships, mainly through the Horizon Europe Shadow Strategic Committee, but we are also interested in the specific workshops dedicated to concrete Partnerships. At this stage, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive picture of which Partnerships are feasible for us, as the negotiations have not finished yet, however, we would like to follow up on our successful participation in existing programmes/initiatives. At national level, continuous consultation with other relevant Ministries and agencies is taking place.
Belgium	The implementation of the European partnerships will take account of the institutional context of Belgium. [Flanders] monitors yearly the participation of Flemish actors in Horizon , and from this year performs a deeper analysis, also for partnerships. [Walloon Region] is updating its smart regional specialisation strategy and its monitoring of its participation (which is not efficient up to now). [FWB] The F.R.S.-FNRS follow the development of cofounded partnerships to offer researchers opportunities to participate in calls with a sufficient bottom up and basic research approach. [BelSpo] remarked that partnerships only make sense when there are no better ways to achieve the objectives of the FP. [Brussels Capital region]- Innoviris is in the process of selecting the partnerships. The region is in the process of updating the regional innovation strategy including Smart specialisation; the choice of partnerships will follow the logic of prior investment sectors.
Cyprus	Cyprus has a very centralised R&I Governance system including the new established Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy, a single funding agency (RIF) and few RPOs. As a result, the participation in EPs will be mainly decided and monitored centrally. As far as the preparation is concerned we are in the process of selecting the EP to be involved. We already had a first round of national consultation with the participation of all stakeholders in focus groups (at cluster level).
Bulgaria	-
Luxembourg	It is our intention to enable our stakeholders to participate in most relevant partnerships in line to our national research strategy and economical development. Our participation has increase in Horizon 2020 as it has increased also in some partnerships. Our ecosystem has it that RDI is funded, for public research, mainly through the National Research Fund whereas private entities are supported by the Ministry of Economy. There was a difference of interest between public and private wrt to the topics that now aligns more. In that sense our involvement will focus on highest possible synergies

Annex III. Publicly accessible links to past evaluations and their results

1. ERA-LEARN hosts a specific page on the website with all reported evaluations of Partnerships - <https://www.era-learn.eu/support-for-p2ps/monitoring-and-assessment/reference-library>
2. OECD Review of the Austrian Research and Innovation System <https://era.gv.at/directory/305>
3. Evaluation of the Austrian Research Fund's (FWF) International Programmes incl. ERA: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1194558>
4. Evaluation of the Austrian participation in Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme (AAL JP 2008-2013) Final Report. <https://repository.fteval.at/view/subjects/EvalProg.html>
5. Evaluation of the AT programmes 'FIT-IT' and thematic initiative „ICT of the Future“. Final Report. <https://repository.fteval.at/364/>
6. Norwegian Polar Research evaluation. <https://evalueringsportalen.no/evaluering/norwegian-polar-research-an-evaluation/EvaluationofNorwegianPolarResearch%28screen%29.pdf/@@inline>
7. Norwegian participation in Horizon 2020 in health, ICT and industry: <https://www.technopolis-group.com/report/norwegian-participation-horizon-2020-health-ict-industry/> <https://www.technopolis-group.com/new-report-technopolis-group-study-potential-increased-norwegian-participation-eu-research-health-ict-industry/>
8. ERA-LEARN Country Report on participation of Spain in P2P. <https://www.era-learn.eu/news-events/news/country-report-spain>
9. The Evaluation of Research Quality (VQR) of the Italian University system. <https://www.anvur.it/en/activities/vqr/>
10. Estonian Potential in Framework Programmes: Analysis and Policy Options. <https://www.etag.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Eesti-v%c3%b5imalused-raamprogrammimis.pdf>
11. <https://www.tc.cz/cs/publikace/periodika/seznam-periodik/echo/echo-3-4-2019> (in Czech)

Annex IV. Country explanations on their rating of progress towards developing a coordinated policy

Explanations for average score:

- **Finland** – Currently, there is no coherent policy for participation at national level, while some coordination mechanisms are available. However, there is a will to create better policies for the upcoming period. The challenge is that the national roles and responsibilities are divided between several actors (ministries, national funding agencies, ...) with their own priorities and procedures, making coordination at national level challenging.
- **Lithuania** – We have management experience where partnership funding and decision-making is done in one institution, but we have not enough experience in managing of partnerships between several funding institutions.
- **Netherlands** – The coordination is much more developed compared to earlier years. However, choice about actual participation, roles and budget will remain up to the sectoral ministries and the agencies or research funders participating on their behalf, as well as monitoring the impact of their participation.
- **Greece** – Certain coordination for selecting participation in EU R&I partnerships is in place (ad-hoc advisory committee at the GSRT); however its mandate and expertise does not include monitoring and evaluation both at the level of individual projects and broader initiatives. (EL)
- **Italy** – Main areas of intervention have been identified: coordination of participation, simplification of rules for participation and reduction of administrative burdens for both public administrations and beneficiaries, integration of participation in European Partnership into national multi-annual national strategies (PNR2021-2027). Implementation roadmap of measures is not yet ready.
- **Spain** – Although the incidence of partnerships is still low or very low, the need to collaborate internationally assuming common management strategies of R&I and procedures is increasingly visible. In fact, the new Ministry of Science and Innovation is working on how to improve the management of partnerships and how to facilitate their alignment with the national system.
- **Portugal** – There is already in place: 1) an inter-agency group for the national positioning, 2) a new network to ensure participation in the framework programme, 3) a national group open to all interested stakeholders for consultation. There is still much to be done.
- **Croatia** – Participation in European partnerships is low to begin with. The fact that interministerial consultations and discussion on National innovation council on Horizon partnerships have been conducted for the first time represents a **progress** on national level. Hence, there is an increased level of interest from funding bodies which is important step forward. However, this process requires more resources i.e. an adequate coordination assistance.
- **Hungary** – We expect progress in developing a more coordinated approach to partnerships and a significant improvement compared to the present low level of policy coordination.
- **Poland** – We have all the cornerstones in place, we need to finalize the details.
- **Germany** – A general decision on the set-up of a national coordination system has been taken in 2019. However, the concrete implementation is still under discussion.
- **Czech Republic** – The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is the main body responsible for transnational cooperation including national participation in the EU Framework Programmes, however, there are other Ministries responsible for support at the national level and specifically oriented to concrete fields and sectors. The coordination of such a broad pool of providers requires strong commitment also from other sides than only from the central management body. The main issue that we are still dealing with is to raise the appropriate awareness not only at the level of interest, but mainly when it comes to concrete form of cooperation and commitment.
- **Belgium-Flanders** – The Flemish R&I funding landscape is not organised in a coordinated way – each organisation has its own strategy, procedures etc. but there is no overall content steering/coordinating body that sets long term goals (also lacking foresight tools). There can be some cooperation at the operational level, but that for specific issues. Very recent exceptions are the Artificial Intelligence, Cyber

Security and Personalised Medicine plans. At the level of the Flemish Government five year plans (sometimes further reaching vision papers) are made, but due to the mainly bottom-up nature of the funding landscape, these plans hardly translate in overall changes of the R&I policy, except for e.g. the creation/merging of institutions, which doesn't happen that often.

- **Belgium-BelSpo** – There is room for improvement which will probably speed up the closer we will get to the start of Horizon Europe in 2021.
- **Brussels Capital Region**- R&I design and funding is managed by Innoviris -funding agency. For new generation of Partnership there is the necessity to establish more coordination with other sectoral regional Ministries to maximize stakeholders' mobilisation, budget needed and leverage of partnerships in the region.
- **Cyprus** – has a centralised R&I governance system, and participation will be decided on the Ministry for R&I level and implemented by the Research and Innovation Foundation (which is the only funding agency). So there is limited need for an extended coordination. In any case the active participation of other Ministries and stakeholders is a challenge.

Explanations for high score:

- **Austria** – As mentioned before, a more strategic approach to the Austrian participation in partnerships is part of the work of the Working Group 'EU Missions and Partnerships'. Preparations have progressed quite far and are now subject to political decisions. (AT)
- **Belgium-Wallonia** – It is the best way to guarantee the added value of the partnerships
- **Estonia** – We have created all the conditions for increasing the participation in the partnerships, also the effort made on raising the awareness on the ministries level has been significant. However, it takes time to get a tangible (or visible) results, as well as budgetary conditions.
- **France** – We are overall well prepared, all actors are motivated and want to have as much information as possible to make well-informed decisions, and we are strongly motivated to participate in many partnerships. Our rather centralized and well-coordinated system is certainly an asset in this context, compared to many other countries (based on our exchanges with other colleagues).
- **Norway** – has had a well-coordinated process regarding the discussion of new partnerships and the response to the commission. There is also still uncertainties regarding the cooperation between the European level (COM) and the national level, that have to be clarified.
- **Sweden** – has a tradition of setting general research policy policies (research and innovation bill, every 4th year), and then leave to the agencies to implement. Most participation in EU-partnerships are of bottom-up initiatives. These are prioritized by the research councils/agency jointly. Monitoring is being performed and a report is produced yearly. Assessment/evaluation not as much.
- **Luxemburg** - [does not provide a reply to this question].

Explanations for low score:

- **Ireland** – has currently a bottom-up approach to EU R&I partnerships, with limited national coordination or direction of participation in EU R&I partnerships, instead allowing research agencies and Ministries to determine levels of participation based upon national R&I priorities and those bodies' strategic goals and objectives. Work is currently underway on a successor national R&I strategy to Innovation 2020, which will cover the years from 2021 to 2027. This would be the appropriate time to consider Ireland's approach.
- **Malta** – Although several efforts are being done to engage the relevant actors for the future EU R&I partnerships, Malta continues to face a problem in terms of lack of interest and understanding of the need and value added in participating in such partnerships.
- **Slovenia** – Lack of interest / necessary awareness on the need to have such structures in place.
- **Bulgaria** – [does not provide a reply to this question].