

The opinion of the Partnership Knowledge Hub on the 2022 Biennial Monitoring Report on European Partnerships.

About

In May 2022, The Commission published the [report](#) *Performance of the European Partnerships: Biennial Monitoring Report (BMR) 2022 on partnerships under Horizon Europe*¹. It provides an overview of Horizon Europe's new partnership landscape. As a baseline report, it establishes benchmarks for assessing progress towards the partnerships' objectives in future reports. The report has been drafted by the Commission's independent Expert Group on support for the strategic coordinating process².

The BMR is a factual report that does not provide any policy conclusions itself.

The Partnership Knowledge Hub (PKH) supports the implementation of the strategic coordinating process for EU R&I partnerships. With this opinion, Member States and Associated Countries³ communicate their conclusions and recommendations in response to the BMR to guide the implementation of European Partnerships, in line with the Horizon Europe principles, and to support strategic discussion on key policy issues.

The MS/AC thank the Review Group⁴ and the European Partnerships for their valuable insights and comments to the opinion during the hearing held on 18 May 2022.

Conclusions

On the BMR itself as a tool for monitoring partnership implementation and impacts:

I. GENERAL

- WELCOMES the BMR 2022 as a first comprehensive overview of the new evolving partnership landscape and as a valuable contribution to European R&I policy making in the field of transnational R&I partnerships. The first Biennial Monitoring Report on European Partnerships provides an excellent baseline for future reporting.
- UNDERLINES the high level of joint commitment from the Commission, the Member States, Associated Countries, and stakeholders towards the implementation of European Partnerships and HIGHLIGHTS the importance of partnerships as one of the most visible success stories of the European Research Area.

¹ European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *Performance of European Partnerships: Biennial Monitoring Report (BMR) 2022 on partnerships in Horizon Europe, 2022*, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/144363>

² <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3738&news=1>

³ The countries associated to Horizon Europe that are members of the Partnership Knowledge Hub are: Iceland, Norway, Turkey (as of March 2022) and Israel (as of June 2022).

⁴ Review Group were Member States representatives of the PKH (volunteers)

- WELCOMES the structure of the BMR, in particular the partnership fiches and the country fiches, as valuable resources for a better understanding and positioning of European Partnerships in the multi-level reality of the European Research Area at regional, national and EU levels as well as industry sector and/or thematic/global challenge levels.
- UNDERLINES the importance of an extensive interaction between all involved actors, in particular the Commission, MS and ACs, Partnerships and beneficiaries to bring together a wealth of knowledge, data, and evidence on partnerships to support an impactful future evolution of the partnership portfolio.
- HIGHLIGHTS in this respect the central role of the Partnership Knowledge Hub for the success of the Strategic Coordination Process, including national and partnership specific insights on partnership outcomes, impacts and possible problems related to the implementation of partnerships.
- ACKNOWLEDGES the diversity of the formats of partnerships as well of the individual partnerships and supports individual approaches for the implementation of the monitoring systems.

II SPECIFIC

- UNDERLINES the relevance of the BMR for developing and applying a robust methodology to evaluate cross-border R&I partnership programmes encompassing regional, national and EU levels.
- NOTES the important baseline function of the first BMR, mainly looking at H2020 data and partnerships while ACKNOWLEDGING the emerging consolidated partnership portfolio of HEU.
- WELCOMES the thematic focus of the first BMR on the green and digital transition as well as resilience issues to better display the important role of European Partnerships for achieving the goals of the ERA.
- WELCOMES the focus in the report on the development of indicators for monitoring the performance of partnerships under an impact-oriented approach, including for developing a common and robust set of indicators valid for all partnerships.
- UNDERLINES that the new policy approach on European Partnerships starts to take shape, in particular with respect to additionality (9 billion € public partner contributions for the first wave of HEU partnerships and 22.4 billion euro from private partners), directionality (digital and green transition and strategic approach) and synergies and cooperation between partnerships.

Recommendations:

I GENERAL:

- CALLS on all Partnership actors to provide quantitative and qualitative information on partnerships results, outcomes, early indication of impacts and on the common indicators for the next BMR.
- CALLS on the Commission to respect the diversity of European Partnerships and consequently ensure an appropriate level of flexibility in the monitoring and reporting requirements towards the diverse landscape of R&I partnerships analysed in the BMR.
- CALLS on the Commission, MS/ACs and Partnerships to develop jointly and agree swiftly on data collection requirements and data structures stemming from the monitoring and reporting needs of the different actors.

- CALLS on the Commission to swiftly provide for a joint data repository where the relevant data from different sources (eCORDA, MS/ACs and partnerships) can be integrated while respecting potential confidentiality issues.
- CALLS on the Commission to ensure coordination between the data collection and monitoring of the partnerships, missions, and ERA monitoring, and to avoid overlap in reporting requirements as much as possible.
- CALLS on the Commission and MS and AC to ensure a proper time perspective in the monitoring and evaluation of partnerships, as most impacts will only materialize in the medium- and long-term.
- CALLS on MS and ACs to provide increasingly information and analysis on the relevance and impact of European Partnerships for regional and national R&I policy making for the next BMR, in particular based on the established national coordination structures for partnerships.
- CALLS on the COM to provide a summary/ abstract of the BMR to enable MS and AC a better use and dissemination.
- CALLS on MS and AC to promote the dissemination and use of the BMR at regional and national levels, including by elaborating translations in home languages and other communication and outreach activities.
- CALLS on MS, ACs and COM to further simplify the development and implementation of European Partnerships, including through developing more interoperable regional, national and EU funding, monitoring, and reporting rules, simplified grant management procedures at EU-level, flexible accounting and controlling rules, etc. in line with state aid rules and further steps towards the use of simplified options for the management of financial and in-kind contributions.
- CALLS on the Commission and MS and AC to firmly embed partnerships in the forthcoming bilateral ERA policy dialogues and ERA country reports with a focus on synergies between European, national, and regional R&I contributions.
- CALLS on the Commission to continue with the current model of BMR elaboration, including with independent experts.

- CALLS on the Commission to make sure that the next BMR will be used in an efficient and effective manner for the Horizon 2020 ex-post evaluation and the Horizon Europe interim evaluation.
- CALLS on the COM for the future BMR to look at the results, effects, and impacts of the partnership portfolio along different dimensions, as relevant (e.g., types, thematic areas, partnership maturity, etc.).

II SPECIFIC

- RECOMMENDS to continue with the country and partnership fiches for the next BMR.
- RECOMMENDS to continue with a specific focus for the next BMR and CALLS on the Commission to make a proposal for possible thematic foci at the latest by 1Q 2023 in view of discussions with PKH.
- RECOMMENDS to better highlight the position of the EIT-KICs in the overall partnership landscape.
- RECOMMENDS to better link the analysis of the BMR to industrial policy initiatives and relevant policy instruments.
- RECOMMENDS to address the issue of 'exit strategies' in the next BMR in 2024 in an appropriate manner.
- RECOMMENDS for the next BMR and/or Horizon evaluations (as relevant) to analyse more specifically the following topics/issues:

- the relevance of European Partnerships in different Horizon Europe and national settings including European as well as regional/national measures to reinforce synergies and openness.
- the extent to which European Partnerships have contributed to Europe's technological sovereignty and strategic autonomy.
- the contribution of partnerships to the implementation of EU Missions.
- the contribution of partnerships to the ERA Actions.
- additional activities beyond joint calls and their contribution to wider policy goals at regional, national and EU levels.
- implementation issues that currently form a concrete obstacle for the smooth functioning of partnerships by focusing on further steps towards administrative simplifications and increased interoperability in the set-up and implementation of European Partnerships.