

Tematisk innspill til EUs kommende rammeprogram for forskning og innovasjon – 24/5497

Vi takker for invitasjon til å gi tematiske innspill til FP10. Vi viser også til tidligere innspill fra FFA til Forskningsrådet til FP10¹, som vi bygger videre på her.

1. Hvilke tematiske områder er det spesielt viktig at vi samarbeider om på europeisk nivå i det kommende rammeprogrammet?

FFA represents 33 research institutes with different thematic focus, some focus on technology, energy, industry and bioeconomy, some on climate, environment and nature and some on social sciences – the common denominator being research on societal challenges in cooperation with private and public sector. In our input to FP10 we will therefore focus mainly on overarching themes and leave more specific thematic input to the institutes.

In general, we recommend that thematic areas of collaboration in FP10 should be aligned with the established societal and political priorities like Norway EU Green Alliance (GA), the Norwegian Long-term plan/strategy for research and the white paper on Long-term Perspectives on the Norwegian Economy 2024.

Green Alliance (GA) is suggested to encompass 9 sectors important for the transition, of which eight are strongly aligned with the thematic clusters of Pilar 2 in Horizon Europe: Batteries and Raw materials, Energy, Green aviation, Nature risk, Green shipping, Climate and neutral smart cities, and tropical forests and deforestation free value chains. The pilar 2 with triple-helix cooperation between authorities, business and the R&D environment has a proven track-record as an enabler and a catalyst for international cooperation. We emphasize the importance of pilar 2 and the clusters to ensure and strengthen collaboration and European impact.

The most recent Norwegian Long-term plan/strategy for research highlights Ocean and Coast, Health, Climate, Environment and Energy, Enabling and Industrial Technologies, Public Safety and Preparedness, Trust and Community. The last few years geopolitical and societal changes have shown these topics to be more important than ever.

The white paper on Long-term Perspectives on the Norwegian Economy 2024 concentrates on the three main topics 1) productivity and labour force competition, 2) the need for adaptation and 3) distribution and preservation of welfare services.

In addition to aligning Norwegian priorities as mentioned above, we mention a few topics that are important both across sectors, for the necessary green and digital transition (twin transition), and for the future Norwegian competitiveness. These topics include Climate, nature and environment; Digitalization; other Norwegian special interests (the ten technology areas included in STEP, Arctic, Antarctic, coast, CCS, and blue and green industries) as well as dual use.

¹ [FFAs innspill til FP10](#) (14.03.24)

Digitalization: Draghi highlights increased digitalization in research and technology development as one of the main reasons why the EU has lost competitiveness to the USA. Over the past years, there has been a shift in the business structure in the USA, where the largest companies today are in high-tech with a high degree of digitalization, while the business sector in Europe is still characterized by traditional manufacturing industries such as the automotive industry. This gap in competitiveness is expected to widen with the introduction and greater focus on AI. Horizon Europe emphasized the green and digital transition/twin transition. This is not as prominent in the new commission's policy papers, but it is still important to keep this high on the R&D agenda since digital R&D still is a necessity for the green transition and for increasing productivity and competitiveness. In alignment with the EU Green Deal, Digital Strategy, and regulatory frameworks like the AI Act and Data Act, Europe must prioritise a sustainable, responsible, and sovereign AI, data, and robotics sector to secure Europe's technological leadership, strategic autonomy, and global competitiveness.

Climate, nature and environment: Adaptation to low emission society requires competitiveness and innovation ability. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (UN) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services both speaks to the importance of seeing climate and nature in context to find solutions for reducing emissions and adjusting to climate change. This global challenge is also a challenge for Europe and for Norway.

2. *De europeiske partnerskapene og samfunnsoppdrag (missions) er virkemidler EU benytter i tillegg til regulære utlysninger. De brukes kun der regulære utlysninger ikke forventes å gi samme utbytte. I partnerskapene bidrar næringsliv og offentlig sektor aktivt, også med finansiering. I samfunnsoppdragene er målet å løse globale utfordringer. Begge de to virkemidlene legger vekt på at kunnskapen skal tas i bruk. På hvilke områder er det særlig viktig for Norge at disse virkemidlene benyttes?*

FFA recognizes the Heitor report's recommendation to take Missions out of FP10, and lift it up to a more political level. The overall effect of missions as part of the framework program for RD&I can be argued to have too low impact and should be thoroughly evaluated. We emphasise that if the administration of Missions is lifted to a more political level, it will be important that the collaborative research to achieve the mission goals continues to be addressed within in the framework program. For Norway as an associated country, it is crucial that the knowledge and technology development is not allocated to an area of the MFF that raises barriers to Norwegian participation

FFA supports the use of partnerships as a useful tool for private and public co-operation. However, partnerships must be aligned to avoid specific and different rules for participation (e.g. funding rates, membership, governance). The arrangement of partnerships must be streamlined. There is now far too much variation regarding both how these partnerships are organized and what the conditions for participation are like. A closer cooperation between RTOs and industry is essential and can be achieved with simpler and more transparent rules and criteria for participation in partnerships.

Furthermore, we call for greater national collaboration regarding Norway's involvement in EU programs and partnerships, and a unified system for goals and framework conditions for Norwegian EU participation at large. This is particularly important among Norwegian actors who have been given national responsibility for the individual partnerships, but also between ministries that finance Norwegian participation in EU programs.

3. *Er det andre forhold det er viktig å få fram i et nasjonalt tematisk innspill*

Funding of collaborative applied medium to long-term research is important to provide risk relief for businesses. EUs Framework Programs (FPs) have offered an arena for collaboration and co-creation that no single country can provide to companies and their suppliers. The past FPs have managed to develop key networks of industrial and RD&I stakeholders working together. We believe that an enlarged and streamlined version of Horizon Europe's Pillar II in the future FP10 will be key to keep the EU in the technological race with its global competitors.

FP10 should focus on excellent cross-border collaborative RD&I, with strong industrial involvement and participation. Pillar II is the only truly collaborative part of the current FP challenging barriers between and within the private and public sectors as well as between basic and applied research. A significant part of FP10's total budget growth should be allocated to Pillar II, with an enhanced focus on European industrial competitiveness.

Furthermore, the next FP must remain the main strategic framework for European funding of research and innovation. Redirecting funding to other programmes should only be carried through in exceptional circumstances, based on a well-coordinated procedure that includes Member States and Associated countries after a thorough impact analysis.

Higher investments at EU-level must be accompanied by **stronger national commitment and larger national investments**, as highlighted in the *Letta*, *Draghi* and *Heitor* reports. Member states and associated countries need to step up their efforts so that strategic targets and goals can be met. We would encourage better alignment between FP10 and the European Research Area (ERA). ERA has the vision to avoid duplication at European level and maximize the combined efforts at EU- and member state level. This is essential for European competitiveness. It will also lead to better alignment at the call level between FP10 and national instruments.

Europe is heading towards strategic autonomy, EU leadership in strategic sectors and better protecting European interests; highlighting concepts such as "EU Strategic value chains", reducing "EU import dependencies" or "access to critical raw materials". It is urgent and of strategic importance that Norwegian actors work together to clarify and to position the role of Norway as an associated country in FP10, understanding the risk that may be at stake of being "left out" since some strategic areas may be limited to EU Member States only. Increased protectionism from the EU could become evident in several parts of FP10, particularly in areas that are geopolitically sensitive or competitive, such as the introduction of Dual Use elements or joint initiatives on Technology Infrastructure.

The Heitor report suggest creating two new councils - an Industrial Competitiveness and Technology Council and a Societal Challenges Council. The importance of pilar 2 must be emphasized, as well as the need for strengthening and making sure industry partners are included. If these two councils are created in FP10, it will be important to ensure that collaborative and cross-border RD&I research is strengthened, not weakened as a result. We stress the need for collaboration between the two councils, establishing joint calls and working closely together. And Norwegian authorities need to ensure that calls from both councils are open, and no barriers are raised for participation from associated countries like Norway.

Sincerely

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