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EU Framework Programme: Call for Evidence response form

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The closing date for this call for evidence is 4 January 2011

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Please indicate your affiliation:

☐	Government Department or Agency
☐	Research Councils and the UK Research Office
☐	Research Institute
☐	Public and Private Research Bodies
☐	Devolved Administration
☐	Regionally-based special interest group
☐	Funding Council University representative organisation
☐	National Academy
☐	Professional Institute

☐	Trade Association
☐	Major Research Charities
☒	Universities
☐	Industry
☐	SMEs
☐	Individual researcher from a university
☐	Individual researcher from industry
☐	Other (please describe):

Question1: What should the UK's high-level objectives be for FP8?

They should address major economic and societal challenges such as the demographic shift, public service provision, enabling technologies, as well as energy (the development and economics of renewables and sustainable energy in all its dimensions), plus food security and security in the broad sense.

Question 2: How can FP8 help deliver economic growth throughout the life of the programme and beyond?

By supporting research in areas that can positively impact changes in infrastructure that address all these areas and create an R&D platform for business.

Question 3: How should FP8 support the wider European context including Europe 2020 and the European Research Area?

By focussing on the highest quality research through well-structured, collaborative projects.

Question 4: The study *Impact of the EU RTD Framework Programme on the UK* has indicated a number of broad benefits to the UK of the programme. Are these benefits identified appropriately and there other impacts that should be considered in addition?

The study identifies the key benefits and these appear to be apportioned appropriately.

Question 5: How can FP8 make a positive contribution to the UK economy – and the low-carbon economy in particular?

By focussing on infrastructure and energy. Particularly relevant here are renewables and marine (fish; aquaculture; biotechnology; spatial

planning - this aspect is very significant in terms of economic and environmental importance in view of the UK's marine resources.

Question 6: How can FP8 support innovation in the UK?

By concentrating on the development of enabling technologies, platforms and on business access. Within the UK, there are existing frameworks for more local support (accepting that these may be subject to change in the current economic environment).

Question 7: What are your views on the split of the FP7 budget between these specific programmes? Should this change in FP8?

The current split between programmes seems acceptable, although a greater allocation to 'People' would be advisable in order to invest in the next generation of researchers.

Question 8: Which areas of Framework Programme funding provide the most EU added-value (see paragraph 6)? And which the least?

All programmes provide value, but Co-operation and People probably provide the most, with Ideas the least.

Question 9: Can efficiencies be found in the Framework Programme because of overlaps between different areas of funding?

National thematic priorities and RCUK grants should build on the platforms created by the Framework Programme. The level of bureaucracy that can be attached to FP projects is very different to other forms of funding and so overlaps are not ovely obvious.

Question 10: What are the arguments for and against FP8 moving towards funding research and development which addresses grand challenges?

Addressing grand challenges can provide greater return and better value. By their nature, these challenges require a multidisciplinary perspective and apan-European approach. The argument against would be a reduction in blue-skies research.

Question11: Which grand challenges (see above) are best tackled on an EU-wide rather than a national level? Within these areas which particular aspects would benefit from an interdisciplinary focus?

All grand challenges are best tackled on a transnational, EU-wide level such as security, food and agriculture (including fisheries and marine). All would benefit from a multidisciplinary approach.

Question 12: How should FP8 engage with countries outside the EU or associated to the Framework Programme in addressing global challenges?[1]

Engagement with countries outside the EU should be particularly relevant for specific parts of the programme, e.g. a global approach on security. There should be a specific mechanism for allowing engagement of non-EU countries providing their governments provide resource/contribution.

Question 13: Should FP8 still provide some thematic focus e.g. in areas such as space and transport? Should any of the current themes be re-visited over the course of FP8 – and if so, how?

Yes, FP8 should still provide thematic focus and these should be broadly defined, as they are currently within FP7.

Question 14: What should be the role of key enabling technologies e.g. ICT and nanotechnology in FP8?

Enabling technologies should be linked to themse such as societal change, ageing etc. Cross-cutting themes would provide platforms for specific applications.

Question 15: Services form a crucial part of the UK economy. Should research into services be addressed specifically in the Framework Programme, and if so, how?

Yes, services are of paramount importance, particularly in an era of public service reform and this is key to all economies.

Question 16: What are your views on how the Framework Programme allocation for collaborative research should be apportioned between themes; enabling technologies and underpinning areas of research e.g. social sciences and humanities?

There should be increases in the allocations for: i)Food, Agri & Bio (with food security being of central importance); ii) Energy (specifically with a focus on renewables, sustainability and energy security; and iii) environment. Social Sciences have a central role working in collaboration with science to address grand challenges and should have a greater allocation that permeates all areas.

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[1] FP7 participants can in principle be based anywhere. There are different categories of country which may have varying eligibility for different specific and work programmes: the EU-27; associated countries– with science and technology cooperation agreements that involve contributing to the framework programme budget; EU accession candidate countries; and third countries whose participation is justified in terms of the enhanced contribution to the objectives of FP7.

Question 17: To what extent should ERC funding focus on supporting frontier research? Are there other areas in which ERC could add value?

Entirely - ERC is about next generation human capital.

Question 18: Should ERC's current emphasis on funding a single investigator continue into FP8?

Yes. Those researchers can then build their work through specific project grants (including RCUK). It is vitally important that we maintain resource to build next generation capacity.

Question 19: Are there any options that could better link ERC activities with private sector interests?

This is better done through domestic/institutional innovation and technology transfer support arrangements.

Question 20: What priority should researcher mobility and skills development have in FP8? What is the best way to address this?

Skills development is well-embedded in UK universities. Contribution to the costs of this should be permitted in EC grants (mirroring changes in RCUK). Mobility is one means of skills development and also collaboration building and should be supported for these reasons only.

Question 21: The capacities specific programme currently covers several policy initiatives relating to capacity-building. Which of these are of most value? Are there other areas which would merit funding?

We recognise the value of all current areas and believe that they are sufficiently broad.

Question 22: What should the relative priority be for the Joint Research Centre under FP8? On which activities should it focus?

An Advanced Institute model?

Question 23: Please comment on the COST framework and its links with the Framework Programme

The COST Network is proving to be a great way of building collaborations and an excellent way to build on nationally-funded research activities.

Question 24: Should FP8 directly support activities aimed at integrating the three sides of the knowledge triangle e.g. KICs?

No - these should continue to be funded outside the Framework Programme.

Question 25: Which instruments (e.g. JTIs, article 185 initiatives) should be retained for FP8? Are any new instruments required?

No scope for new instruments. Eurostars, AAL and EDCTP should be retained.

Question 26: Please comment on the Risk Sharing Finance Facility. Should a scheme of this kind be included within FP8?

No response.

Question 27: What should the balance be between funding large-scale programmes e.g. the article 185 *programmes* above and smaller *projects* individually administered by the Commission?

The balance should remain as it is currently.

Question 28: What should be the role of public-private partnerships in FP8?

The role of these partnerships should continue as it is currently defined.

Question 29: What lessons from evaluations of previous framework programmes can help with the development of FP8?

Simplification, reduction in bureaucracy - current levels are a disincentive to participate, particularly for companies. This appears to be growing and must be tackled.

Question 30: What steps could be taken to ensure that knowledge gained from FP8 is disseminated and exploited – and remains easily accessible over time?

See above re domestic/institutional arrangements. Support should also be included within EC grants - funds for knowledge exchange infrastructure.

Question 31: Would any proactive effort to alter the current balance of funding between universities, research organisations and businesses be appropriate or effective? If so, what might be involved?

No!

Question 32: What could be done at EU level to encourage more businesses – especially SMEs - to apply?

Simplifying procedures and speeding up payments - this is the single largest barrier to participation.

Question 33: What could the Commission do to reduce bureaucracy of FP8 over and above the current simplification proposals (including changes to the Financial Regulations and Implementing Rules)?

Every effort must be made to reduce bureaucracy - as mentioned above, this is the single largest barrier to participation for companies with which we work. The EC should use the lightest possible touch in terms of audit in regions, territories and organisations where robust accounting and audit procedures exist. The clearest possible up-front guidance on eligible costs, audit test etc would make a real difference.

Question 34: Is there a role for a two-stage applications process analogous to that used by the Technology Strategy Board[2]?

Yes - this would be a better way to manage workload/effort expended on preparing bids.

Question 35: Should the programme move away from a cost/input-based funding model to one based more on results/outcomes/performance?

This would be high risk because it is impossible to anticipate the results/outcomes of research programmes and tto move to a model based on results/outcomes/performance could act as a deterrent if there is a perception that there could be some level of post-hoc clawback.

Question 36: Should the rules on intellectual property in FP7 be changed for FP8?

No

Question 37: Is the proportion of overheads funded by FP7 appropriate? Should this be adapted in FP8 to create more consistency with other sources of funding?

The overheads funded by FP7 are not appropriate. There should be consistency with those offered by RCUK (ideally) and this would also cover some of the additional management costs associated with FP projects.

Question 38: Within the current UK public expenditure constraints[3], could the UK do more on a cost-neutral basis to encourage participation in FP generally?

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[2] For details of Technology Strategy Board processes see www.innovateuk.org
[3] See http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spend_index.htm

Maintain/develop funding for costs of preparation of EC funding applications/network development, along the lines of the Scottish Funding Council's PACER fund.

Question 39: How effective are the current UK support services?

Services provided by the UK Research Office in Brussels are good - contacts are responsive and helpful to both academics and support staff.

Question 40: What could be done at UK level to encourage more businesses – especially SMEs - to apply?

See Q32. Where the encouragement comes from does not change the possible deterrent! Speeding up payments is also vital as delays cause cash flow problems for SMEs and pose a significant risk.

Question 41: Are there any lessons from other countries that could help raise UK participation?

This is probably a question for someone sitting centrally in Brussels or UKRO.

Question 42: Please add additional comments here in relation to UK interests in the Framework Programme.

None

Do you have any other comments that might aid the consultation process as a whole?

There is a need for a co-rdinated debate given that domestic arrangements for R&D support are undergoing significant change.

Please use this space for any general comments that you may have, comments on the layout of this consultation would also be welcomed.

Thank you for your views on this consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge receipt of individual responses unless you tick the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply ☒

At BIS we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be okay if we were to contact you

again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

☒ Yes ☐ No