



ECTRI RECOMMENDATIONS ON HORIZON EUROPE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

***Commission's proposals for the next Research and Innovation
Framework Programme
COM (2018) 435 Final and COM (2018) 436 Final***

August 2018

The European Conference of Transport Research Institutes (ECTRI) is an international non-profit association that was officially founded in April 2003. It is the first attempt to unite the forces of the foremost multimodal transport research centres across Europe and to thereby promote the excellence of European transport research.

Today, it includes 28 major transport research institutes or universities from 21 European countries. Together, they account for more than 4,000 European scientific and research staff in the field of transport. ECTRI as the leading European research association for sustainable and multimodal mobility is committed to provide the scientifically based competence, knowledge and advice to move towards a green, safe, efficient, and inclusive transport for people and goods.

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1. Introduction

Research and Innovation constitutes the engine of many EU Priorities. The pursuit of industrial leadership to maintain and extend European prosperity and growth depends on an inspiring committed pan-European research and innovation strategy. Successful outcome will boost employment throughout the Union and strengthen European competitiveness in the global market, and hence contribute to the social welfare of the European society and well-being and quality of life of their citizens.

Pressing societal challenges demand novel solutions to achieve sustainable growth. Many of these will require a pan-European approach. Sustainability, capacity management and safety enhancement in transport are prime examples demanding European solutions that can only be addressed by a comprehensive European Research and Innovation Programme.

ECTRI recognises an undisputable added value of the European Research and Innovation Programmes (FPs) and have supported them over years. By funding international, interdisciplinary and cross sectoral collaboration, generating an EU wide competition for excellence, and stimulating the mobility of researchers, ECTRI acknowledges that the FPs are a significant means to strengthen the knowledge base of the EU, stimulate innovation and address major global challenges.

Horizon Europe (HE) will be the primary feeder and the operational branch of the European Research and Innovation policy. Hence, it is of utmost importance to implement an effective, efficient and impact-oriented strategy towards a successful Horizon Europe. In this respect, the strategic planning process needs to be detailed in its content, process and methodology.

ECTRI welcomes the possibility offered by the European Commission to provide views on its current proposals establishing the new Framework Programme (FP) for research and innovation, Horizon Europe^{1,2}. We would like to do this on the basis of our commitment to European research in the field of transport and the broad involvement of our members in EU FPs. These recommendations build upon previous contributions³ and are meant to feed into the current legislative debate.

¹ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, COM (2018) 435 Final, June 2018

² Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, COM (2018) 436 Final, June 2018

³ ECTRI position paper on the Research and Innovation Framework Programme 9 (FP9), February 2018
ECTRI position paper on missions in framework programme 9 (FP9), March 2018
ECTRI suggested amendments to the EC proposal COM (2018) 435, June 2018

2. Recommendations to the EC's proposals on Horizon Europe

ECTRI welcomes the effort and commitment that is reflected in the European Commission's proposals for the future framework programme. In particular, ECTRI sees as positive that the European Commission:

- keeps the successful structure of the three pillars in the new generation of research programme,
- looks to foster synergies of funds between programmes, in particular in applying similar rules, and
- continues its efforts in simplifying the rules for participation and dissemination.

As much as we appreciate the coordination and evolutionary development in succeeding the current framework programme, we see some aspects that need to be considered and further developed to extend and maximise the success of the emerging HE framework.

To strengthen the European Commission's proposal, ECTRI recommends the following:

The current proposal assumes a budget of roughly 100 billion € for the next period. **This budget is not sufficient.** It clearly misses the 3% GDP investment target of the EU. The significance of the funding, its correlation with impact and effectiveness have been clearly shown in several publications including the LAB-FAB-APP Lamy report⁴. This aspect is particularly critical as HE is burdened with more topics (e.g. defence and security, migration), missions aiming to pursue a measurable impact that is easily understandable as betterment by broader society, as well as partnerships that drive technologies to pursue industrial leadership. To reflect these additional goals, **we propose at least a 120 billion € budget frame.**

It is also difficult to understand why the current proposal omits the chance to define the specific budget breakdown of the clusters. The political emphasis on specific topics should be expressed with corresponding budget lines for the clusters. **Budgetary vagueness makes the proposal hard to assess and shifts this vital aspect to strategic programming.** This structural shift of responsibility away from the European Parliament and Council is hard to justify, in regard to long term commitment of partners and private investments into a multiannual programme for research and innovation. The proposal would greatly benefit from a **clear budget breakdown, defining priorities and budgets within the clusters**, in order to allow clear negotiations at European Parliament and Council level.

Furthermore, Horizon Europe introduces 'missions' and the 'European Innovation Council' as new elements to the framework programme. **It is important to maintain proper balance within the research and innovation chain.** It is crucial to strengthen all levels rather than shifting the focus only towards the highest levels of the chain, to push for instance success in innovation. Neglecting the lower levels of research will dry out the innovation landscape in the mid and long term.

⁴ LAB – FAB – APP Investing in the European future we want. Report of the independent High Level Group on maximising the impact of EU Research & Innovation Programmes, July 2017

Past research and innovation programmes were well aligned with the EU Strategies, e.g. the White Paper on Transport⁵. The current legislative proposal for HE **lacks references to these strategies**. In particular, we feel that the proposal establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe⁶ misses any effort to embrace those strategies. We understand the brevity and limited degree of detail of the legislation, due to its "general approach". But, in our opinion, there is no good reason to avoid references to well accepted strategies in the stakeholder community, such as STRIA or, FlightPath2050 in this specific programme.

We support the new concept of mission in research and innovation. However, it is worth highlighting that **a clear definition of a concept and implementation of missions is still lacking in the current Horizon Europe proposal** despite the multi-year discussions, high-level advisory input and top-level endorsement by the European Commission addressing mission in research and innovation. This vagueness is a major weakness of this legislative proposal. **We ask for a clear definition of missions that stakeholders in the research community can endorse**. The implementation of missions are likely to have a significant impact on the second pillar and consume a significant portion of the collaborative research budget, while there are still many questions open regarding missions.

We appreciate the intention to design partnerships in a way that allows for easier access for smaller and mid-size organisations, increasing attractiveness for SMEs and EU-13 participants. In addition to this ambition, it also seems necessary **to attract industry and the private sector in terms of the funding share**. Partnerships need to find a way to attract key players from all sectors to drive their technological development. Furthermore, partnerships need to gain in transparency and accountability, as they are administering significant public resources. In general, **we support the establishment and continuation of PPPs to create better impact for dedicated topics**, such as decarbonisation and inclusive mobility in transport.

To extend and maximise the success of Horizon Europe Framework Programme, ECTRI recommends to:

- **Increase the total budget to at least EUR 120 billion**
- **Add a clear budget breakdown, defining priorities and budget within the clusters**
- **Maintain proper balance within the research and innovation chain**
- **Add clear references to well accepted EU strategies**
- **Develop a clear definition of missions**
- **Assure establishment and continuation of PPPs for dedicated topics**

⁵ Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system, COM (2011) 144 Final, March 2011

⁶ See footnote 2

The specific programme implementing Horizon Europe (COM (2018) 436)⁷ references the global policy priorities derived from the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In this respect we consider there are some thematic aspects to reflect on in the specific programme, in particular in relation to the cluster 4 "Climate, Energy and Mobility" such as:

- Cluster 4 «Climate, Energy and Mobility» is well suited to tackle the most pressing societal challenge of climate change. The cluster focuses on SDG 13 (Climate action) and SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and is well in line with future societal needs. Given the importance of the European transport sector, **it is strongly recommended that cluster 4 also targets SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)** to allow sustainable societal transitions and to enable the required transformation towards mobility decarbonisation.
- Urbanisation will generate new challenges in the future, including the necessity for completely new mobility concepts to provide adequate accessibility to all. The cluster targets SDG 11 (Sustainable cities) in activity "Communities and cities", but we believe that both, **sustainable cities and mobility need a more profound role in the future programme** and should include concepts such as Mobility as a Service, new regulations, city logistics that direct urban planning towards reduced demand for resource intensive modes of transport and space.
- The rethinking of the whole mobility system including users, vehicles (new technologies as Connected and Automated Vehicles), fuels and infrastructure and the associated business models must not stop at the energy source. Mobility is the means to provide the access to life relevant needs (goods, work, social contacts, health, culture ...). According to SDG 11.2 access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all is essential for public welfare. **Effort in understanding the human factors to support behaviour change is key** to achieve accepted and sustainable solutions.
- Traffic accidents are a global human and economic tragedy. SDG 3.6 highlights this fact and sets a global target for reduction in fatalities and severe injuries in traffic accidents. However, the cluster "Climate, Energy and Mobility" importantly fails to address traffic safety in a comprehensive way. Due to its importance in SDG 3 (a. 3.6), relevance to society, as well as growth opportunities for the European industry (SDG 9) we believe that **the role of traffic safety and its prominence needs to be strengthened within this cluster**. "Safe, integrated and resilient transport systems" are proposed as an area of intervention, to continue from Horizon 2020 into the new cluster. As expressed from its title, such an area needs also to accommodate research on resilient transport systems.

⁷ See footnote 2

- Production and supply systems will change radically in the future. Therefore, there is a need for a stronger focus on logistics. This sector is of utmost importance for employment in the transport sector within Europe but will be challenged and changed by digitalization. The maritime sector specifically constitutes a significant part of the global logistics chain, where alternative fuels and digitalization will be the focus, towards disruptive solutions. **A better focus on logistics and more generally on the mobility of goods** (without forgetting reverse logistics) will help to align this cluster with SDG 9 and improve its leverage on SDG 13, 7 and 11.

For cluster 4 “Climate, Energy and Mobility”, ECTRI recommends that:

- The cluster also targets SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)
- Sustainable cities and mobility are given a more profound role in the future programme
- Effort in understanding the human factors to support behaviour change is reinforced
- The role of traffic safety and its prominence is strengthened within the cluster as well as the resilience of transport systems
- Logistics, and more generally the mobility of goods, is given a better focus.

ECTRI hopes that the recommendations presently put forward will meet the interest of and be positively considered by the European Commission, the European Parliament and Council of the EU in the ongoing discussions on the new European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. ECTRI looks forward to continuing its work with the European Institutions to shape and improve such programme in view to extend and maximize its success.