

Ensuring EU Research & Innovation truly benefits EU citizens

European Parliament 2019-2024



MEPs have a key role to play in ensuring the EU's R&I policies deliver real benefits for people and the planet. Civil society organisations have developed this guide for MEPs to set out key opportunities and risks in the EU's next research and innovation programme



Why civil society matters in Research and Innovation (R&I)

Civil society are not traditionally seen as stakeholders in R&I, unlike scientists, researchers and industry. Yet R&I is deeply relevant and important for society beyond institutional or commercial priorities. It is one of the key policy areas that can help us deliver a better future for EU citizens as well as our international commitments, especially the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. R&I is integral to addressing the many challenges faced by society, including in health and wellbeing, food and farming systems, climate change, energy, democracy and digitalisation.

WHY PUBLIC FUNDING OF R&I MATTERS

Public funding in R&I is a public investment in knowledge production as a public good. As such, it plays a critical role in steering priorities to ensure a societal impact-driven R&I agenda. It is the duty of public institutions to prioritise areas where there is a **public need**, for example supporting areas neglected by the private sector and where there is a high societal value. Public funding is also fundamental if we want to ensure the accessibility, availability and affordability of end results of research to serve the public interest.

THE EU'S ROLE IN PUBLICLY FUNDED R&I: HORIZON EUROPE

The EU funds R&I through its “Framework Programme for Research and Innovation”. The current programme is Horizon 2020. It includes a dedicated pillar on societal challenges as well as a dedicated programme on engaging citizens and civil society, known as Science With and For Society.

Horizon 2020 will end in 2020 and will be replaced with **Horizon Europe**, which will cover the period 2021- 2027. With an expected budget of €97.6 billion (subject to MFF negotiations), Horizon Europe will be a major opportunity to bring real benefits for citizens and the planet and to deliver on our international commitments by 2030.

KEY NOVELTIES

Horizon Europe includes several novelties to help maximise societal impact:

1. “Societal Impact Pathways”.

For the first time, Horizon Europe defines the concept of “societal impact”, **linking it to sustainable development** and including corresponding indicators linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and citizen engagement.

Unfortunately, civil society is not included in the indicators (a step backwards from last programme) - though the Horizon Europe legislation does include a commitment *in general* to monitor civil society engagement.

Will the European Commission’s DG Research properly implement these measures, and how?

2. Co-design and co-creation with society.

The mid term review of Horizon 2020 noted that citizen and civil society participation in the programme was still unacceptably low. Recognising the need to engage citizens to ensure R&I aligns with the needs, values and expectations of society, the European Commission announced that Horizon Europe would be co-designed and co-created with society. **So far though, concrete plans are lacking.**

Will the European Commission reach out beyond its usual partners in industry and top research institutions?

3. Climate mainstreaming.

At least **35%** of its funding is to be earmarked for climate-related projects. The impact pathways include dedicated climate indicators, and the European Commission must report on outputs, innovations and general efforts related to this. The results of this monitoring should be made public.

Does this mean that the European Commission will stop funding research into coal, for instance?

Without proper oversight, several aspects of the programme risk undermining any effort to have publicly funded projects serve societal needs:

- 1. Horizon Europe will merge societal challenges with industrial leadership, into a new “Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness” pillar.** This pillar (proposed budget of €52.7 billion) will be the focal point of the whole programme, therefore how its priorities are set is critical. Competitiveness is a key priority of the EU, however it is not always the case that efforts to improve European industrial leadership align with sustainable development or the public interest. Worryingly, **Horizon Europe does not include any safeguards to prioritise societal impact in cases where economic interests and societal goals conflict.**
- Horizon Europe’s main pillar will devote a significant amount of its budget (up to 50%) to major partnerships, **the largest part going to public private partnerships (PPPs).** The priority-setting process for these PPPs risks being driven by industries whose main objective is to enhance competitiveness and advance the interests of the private sector. Several impact assessments¹ and reports² have **questioned their governance structures, and whether they are equipped to deliver societal impact.**
- 3. Innovation support** is being scaled up in Horizon Europe. The EU has systematically coupled research and innovation, focusing strongly on commercialisation of research results. However, innovation is only useful so long as does not harm public and environmental health. We must therefore support *social* and not just technological innovations, and balance industry’s need to constantly innovate for commercial motives with precaution. However, Horizon Europe might, for the first time, refer to the so-called **“innovation principle”** in its legal basis. This tool, which was pushed by industry interests, does not define what is safe or sustainable innovation, and **civil society is concerned it could be used to undermine the precautionary principle and, e.g. erode social and environmental regulations and protections.**
- 4. Horizon Europe will discontinue the Science With and For Society programme.** The funding available for societal engagement and Responsible R&I (RRI) activities within the next programme risks being greatly reduced. While stated efforts to mainstream societal engagement are welcome, the absence of a dedicated focal point and earmarked budget for these activities implies a lack of coherence, resources or strong leadership which could result in poor quality societal engagement.

1 https://www.imi.europa.eu/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/reference-documents/SocioeconomicImpactAssessment_FINALMay2016.pdf

2 Technopolis. Increased coherence and openness of European Union research and innovation partnerships. June 2017. http://www.technopolis-group.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/eu_ri_partnerships_final_report.pdf

WHAT MEPs CAN DO

SHORT TERM

Ask questions to the incoming Commissioner: the hearings for the next Commission will take place in **October 2019**. MEPs can pose questions to the new Commissioner, as well as other DGs with R&I competences (E.g. DG AGRI, SANTE and ENVI)



MID TERM

Monitor societal impact in annual budget procedures (including approval of the annual accounts of the public-private partnerships)

Monitor through a detailed mid term review of Horizon Europe:

- › Citizen and civil society participation
- › Earmarked funding for addressing climate change and the practical operationalisation of the climate target
- › Societal impact indicators and their alignment with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement
- › Proportion of Pillar 2 funding dedicated to societal impact
- › Whether Horizon Europe missions are meeting societal impact objectives and engaging societal actors
- › The societal impact of public-private partnerships

ONGOING

Become a member of the EP's 'working group on Horizon Europe' and use it stay engaged and ask questions

Request **regular exchanges with the Commissioner and heads of units** at committee and bilateral level (as well as publicly organised events) and ask them to report on how the programme is delivering on e.g. the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement

Hold the other institutions accountable by **making enquiries on EU policies** (e.g. asking **written or oral questions** to the Commission)

Use your voice as a public figure to raise awareness on the societal impact and challenges of the EU's R&I programme including through media, committee and plenary sessions, events and meetings.

WHAT PUBLIC BENEFITS WOULD CIVIL SOCIETY LIKE TO SEE R&I DELIVER?

ACROSS HORIZON EUROPE

- › **Transparency and traceability** of public funding for R&I by developing tools to track funding
- › **Public interest conditions** (i.e. quality, availability, accessibility, affordability)
- › Robust and structured **civil society engagement** (with transparent methods) in shaping the strategic priorities and work programmes of Horizon Europe as well as in the co-creation of research projects
- › **Improved evaluation of projects** through developing robust **societal impact indicators**, creating a system of accountability for beneficiaries and engaging societal actors in evaluation
- › **Mechanisms to safeguard the public interest in the major public-private partnerships** to avoid diversion of public funding to private interests

BETTER HEALTH & WELLBEING FOR ALL

- Health R&I should prioritise public health and patients' needs, ensure the quality and safety of products and address health inequalities at EU and global level*
- › **Access to and affordability** of the results of biomedical R&I, driven by the public interest
 - › **An inclusive and transparent Innovative Health Initiative** (successor of the of the Innovative Medicines Initiative PPP) – which involves civil society organisations in agenda-setting and research projects, prioritizes public health needs over commercial interests and safeguards patients safety
 - › Mechanisms for identifying public health needs through **transparent and inclusive processes**
 - › A comprehensive **global health R&I strategy** including dedicated collaboration with low- and middle-income countries
 - › An ambitious successor programme to the **European and Developing countries Clinical Trials Partnership**
 - › Support for areas with little private sector interest such as **poverty-related and neglected diseases**
 - › Research approach through **prevention** (e.g. environmental health) and not only treatment
 - › Funding should prioritise products with **added therapeutic value**

TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND FARMING

A transition towards sustainable food systems is urgently needed to deliver benefits for people and the planet, and to ensure the ecological transition necessary to tackle climate change impacts

- › Priority for research into climate-resilient, diversified farming systems based on **agroecological** innovation
- › Healthy food and sustainable **diets**
- › Crop protection based on functional diversity as **alternatives to pesticides**
- › **Soil conservation** and better soil management for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- › Digital technologies adapted to agroecological approaches. Digital **technologies must be open-source** and socio-economically sustainable for farmers.
- › Strong knowledge and innovation systems promoting agroecology and prioritising **farmer-led research** and exchange among farmers and citizens
- › **GMO-free plant varieties** and animal breeds that are resilient to stress and climate change
- › Support for **social innovations** on sustainable food systems (including support to the development of short-supply chains and relocalised food systems).
- › Responsible and **sustainable fisheries**
- › A sustainable **integrated food policy approach** for the EU³

3 Following up on the "Towards a Common Food Policy report" http://www.ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/CFP_Full-Report.pdf and on the Food2030 programme

AMBITIOUS CLIMATE ACTION AND A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

To achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and the European Commission proposal for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, EU R&I must support reduced waste and consumption and the decarbonization of all sectors by developing zero-carbon processes and products.

- › No funding for **fossil fuels**
- › **Renewable energy generation**, ensuring sustainable and ethical raw material sourcing and usage
- › **Citizen empowerment** and engagement in decentralised and democratic energy systems
- › Electricity storage, smart distribution and management
- › Efficient **zero-carbon transportation** and transport systems
- › **Sustainable consumption and lifestyle** - including supporting social innovation to reduce consumption
- › Resource efficient and **clean production**
- › Low-tech '**cradle to cradle**' technologies and fully clean production
- › **Waste avoidance** and reduction
- › **Water conservation** (linked to agriculture)
- › Technologies for low- and middle-income countries and **fair technology transfer**
- › Sustainability of **biomass** (the bioeconomy should not substitute policies to reduce resource consumption)
- › Upscaling **circular economy**

SOCIETAL ENGAGEMENT TO BETTER ALIGN R&I WITH THE NEEDS AND VALUES OF SOCIETY

Engaging citizens and civil society organisations in R&I agenda-setting is essential to better align the process of R&I and its outcomes with the needs, values, and expectations of society

Holistic societal engagement with a clear strategy (co-designed with civil society) that:

- › **ensures citizens and civil society are meaningfully included in the strategic planning processes for Horizon Europe**
- › ensures citizen voices are meaningfully included using robust participation methods such as **deliberative citizens' assemblies**
- › facilitates civil society organisations engagement **by addressing barriers to citizen and civil society participation**, such as lack of resources or information.
- › ensures continuity of research and actions funded under **Science with and for Society**, with an ambitious budget for this topic
- › Builds on existing projects to **mainstream Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) principles**
- › The topic includes early **ex-ante impact assessments of the ethical, social, economic and environmental impact** of new technologies within Europe and low and middle income countries

Open Science:

- › Ensure societal engagement in projects, e.g. **participatory research** with not-for-profit CSOs (10% of the pillar II budget)
- › Move beyond PPPs to adopt a **PPPP (public-private-people)** approach where civil society is an equal partner with decision-making agency
- › Ensure Citizens Science is a genuine **two-way dialogue** between experts and non experts and not merely top-down communication
- › Ensure dialogues on the **social acceptability of technology** are focused on co-creating R&I agendas with citizens
- › Link the application of the **Precautionary Principle** to open dialogue with citizens
- › Promote summaries in ordinary language for published papers, to promote access to scientific knowledge
- › Develop a **typology of civil society** organisations that distinguishes societal impact-oriented from profit-oriented organisations

OPEN ACCESS

The results and outputs of publicly funded R&I, such as publications and research data, should be accessible, free of cost and other barriers, to all citizens by default

Open data:

- › Address **low application rates** of open data rules
- › Ensure the principle “As open as possible as closed as necessary” does not undermine open access by making sure that **exceptions are strictly limited to rare circumstances** and “opt-outs” for commercial reasons do not become the norm
- › Move beyond existing pilots to **make open data the default** for EU funding
- › Develop tools for free exchange e.g. free databases and open source software

Open access publishing:

- › Implement ambitious policies on open access scientific publications
- › Remove paywalls via **open licenses** such as the Creative Commons
- › Adopt policies to prevent publishers charging exorbitant fees for open access e.g. by limiting the portion of grants available for publishing costs

PEACE & SECURITY

R&I activities carried out under Horizon Europe should have an exclusive focus on civil applications

- › **No budgetary transfers to the European Defence Fund** or any defence research funds.
- › Non-violent **conflict prevention** and resolution process
- › Socially-driven processes for overcoming **gender and racial discrimination**
- › **Verification technology** on weapons of mass destruction, fully autonomous weapons (also known as “killer robots”) and other banned/restricted weaponry
- › Generation of mechanisms that ensure the clear and transparent **separation of civilian and military research** and applications

PHONE BOOK

Stay in touch with us! We are at your disposal for further questions, dialogue and insights on ensuring societal impact of R&I. See below for a list of relevant civil society contacts.

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