

# Swedish Position Paper on the next EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme, FP10



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European research and innovation collaborations contribute to maintaining and strengthening European values for a free, open, and value-based market economy. In today's geopolitically challenging situation, it is important that the EU's long-term competitiveness and openness are at the core of an open strategic autonomy. European research and innovation collaboration is of great importance for Swedish universities, industry, institutes, public sector entities, and other stakeholders. The Swedish position paper aims to present key principles that Sweden believes need to be safeguarded or improved in the development of the next framework program for research and innovation to serve the development, competitiveness, and prosperity of all of Europe.

Sweden aims to increase its participation in the EU's framework program for research and innovation. National investments made in synergy with the EU's framework program are expected to have a greater impact in terms of excellent research and innovation, both nationally and for the EU. To enhance the positive synergy effects, the main criterion for evaluating projects in the EU's framework program should be excellence. The framework program should fund both basic and challenge-driven research as well as innovation, have a structure that is predictable and stable over time, and enable collaborations across national and disciplinary boundaries, such as the use of research infrastructures. There should be mechanisms to demonstrate that the framework program and its investments effectively steer towards higher quality and that research and innovation increasingly become reusable and beneficial for researchers, businesses, and society, which includes striving for an effective balance between research and innovation.

# Swedish Position on FP10

## Ensure that excellence is the foundation of the framework program

### Quality

- Maximize budget efficiency. Strengthen the EU's international competitiveness by allocating budget funds with a constant focus on excellence in all research and innovation initiatives. This includes balanced funding between basic research and applied research and preventing the budget from being used for anything other than research and innovation.
- Support fundamental research by providing strong and dedicated support to the European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) to promote research excellence and facilitate internationalisation, including the possibility to apply for ERC funds in the fields of Euratom.
- Safe-guard challenge-driven research. Maintain and strengthen the focus on addressing societal challenges through Pillar II and create clear pathways from fundamental research to innovation. Integrate fundamental research, applied research, and innovation to achieve maximum benefit.
- Focus on research and innovation. Allocate FP10 funds strictly for research and innovation to maintain programme continuity and efficiency, and ensure that every euro contributes to new knowledge, discoveries, and technological advancements.
- Implement concrete and effective incentives, career advancement structures, and evaluation mechanisms that contribute to making the scientific process more open and accessible and ensure that such quality enhancement-mechanisms are integrated into the next programme period.
- Uphold good research practice. Ensure high quality and integrity in the peer review of ap-

plications. Develop processes that guarantee that the best applications are funded based on objective criteria and excellence.

- Ensure quality in the innovation processes through transparency, open competition, and peer review that includes more relevant assessment criteria.

### Gender equality

- Gender equality in research is a matter of both justice and quality. Continue the efforts on gender mainstreaming as a central and horizontal principle in research and innovation.
- Promote and accelerate institutional change. Work actively to achieve goals of increased gender equality in careers at all levels and balanced gender representation in decision-making.

### Resilience and Open Strategic Autonomy

- A strengthened focus on sustainability is important for innovation and the EU's long-term competitiveness. Interdisciplinary research is needed to solve complex challenges in sustainability.
- Dynamic research agenda. The research agenda must be flexible and demand-driven, with particular emphasis on including social sciences, humanities, and governance innovation. This is necessary to address complex challenges such as climate change and digital transformation.
- Realisation of the ERA. Work actively to achieve the goals of the European Research Area (ERA) with a focus on collaboration, excellence, and cross-border access to research results.



- Incentives for investments. Design the programme to encourage Member States to invest at least 3% of GDP in research and innovation through targeted incentives and strategic planning to achieve both short- and long-term competitiveness.
- Focus on co-benefits. Strengthen the integration of sustainability focus in all parts of the framework programme and create synergies between different research efforts.

### Responsible Internationalisation

- Prioritise responsible internationalisation. Openness is the foundation of international research cooperation, while at the same time there needs to be an awareness of the need to protect national interests and knowledge. This means that the focus should continue to be on research cooperation being as open as possible and as closed as necessary. There is a need for strengthened support, increased competence, and effective information sharing to identify and manage risks, so that activities within higher education, research, and innovation can take place safely and openly, considering the difficult trade-offs that need to be made.

A balanced assessment of both risks and opportunities is necessary, emphasizing the need for strengthened research integrity and academic freedom.

- Synergies between civil and defence research. Investigate opportunities to find and strengthen synergies between civil and defence research and development, and how such synergies can be managed and utilised while ensuring that excellence in research and innovation remains the top priority. Work towards a common definition of “dual-use” in research and development so that potential can be harnessed, and risks managed, and with regard to the research area and societal context. Avoid unforeseen obstacles that could lead to confusion or unnecessary restrictions on the terms for grants in civilian research programs.
- Strengthen research security. Implement guidelines and support to identify, assess, and manage security risks in international collaborations to prevent protected activities and knowledge at universities from ending up in the wrong hands and to strengthen a safe and secure research environment.

## Review the structure of the framework programme

### Stability

- The pillar structure, in its current form, should be maintained to ensure continuity and predictability, enabling participants to focus on addressing global challenges and promoting Europe’s competitiveness without needing to adapt to a new structure that may result in missed opportunities and altered participation conditions.
- Strengthen the distinctive features of the pillars and increase interaction and synergies between them. To avoid overlaps and promote complementarity, a clearer distinction between Pillar II and III should be established. This fosters integrated efforts between the pillars and interdisciplinary collaboration and facilitates understanding and participation for new actors.
- The size and focus of the clusters should be reviewed, with the aim of stimulating and coordinating efforts. Include the development of cross-cluster calls and collaboration with the JRC to promote interdisciplinary research collaborations and improve the clusters’ effectiveness.
- Space matters should be given a clearer position in the framework programme’s structure to ensure that space infrastructure benefits an increasingly digital society and critical societal functions such as secure communications, increased broadband coverage, and crisis preparedness and civil defence.
- The number of instruments and their focus, particularly partnerships and potential EU mis-





sions, must have clearly defined objectives and clear governance and phasing-out mechanisms. This can improve the efficiency and relevance of research and innovation efforts, reduce fragmentation, and increase focus on the most promising initiatives.

- EU missions must be thoroughly evaluated. It must be ensured that they contribute to the main purpose of the framework programme to fund cross-border research and innovation activities. Missions should have clear and measurable goals and be more closely linked to other instruments within the framework programme to increase their relevance and effectiveness. If this is not achieved, the EU missions should be adjusted or considered for removal from the programme.
- The partnership structure should be simplified, clarified, and made more transparent with stronger alignment with the needs of Member States and stakeholders. This involves greater openness in the selection process for new partnerships and improved complementarity with other parts of the framework programme to ensure resource efficiency and maximise European added value.
- A stable and long-term budget is crucial for long-term planning and funding high-quality research projects that can strengthen Europe's competitiveness. Restructuring of the budget should only occur exceptionally.

## Innovation

- Transform the EIT/KIC into self-financed entities while specific calls within the framework programme fund projects related to the KIC to ensure a smooth transition to greater self-financing and continued innovation support. This means that the KIC must demonstrate its financial sustainability through market-adapted business models and partnerships.
- Define technological infrastructure with a focus on its contribution to societal benefit and integrate this definition into the framework programme. Promote the development of technology that meets societal needs by creating test and demonstration environments. To facil-

itate the innovation processes of knowledge-intensive companies, the regulatory frameworks should be simplified, and access to these environments optimised. This includes investments in regulatory testbeds and the development of new standards.

- Ensure that the European Innovation Council (EIC) continues to enable actor-initiated innovations and develop funding opportunities for scaling-up young deep-tech companies through the EIC Accelerator. This requires a balance between support for high-risk projects and market-oriented innovations to maximise societal benefits and industrial competitiveness.
- Develop innovation ecosystems that contribute to scaling-up by harmonising regulations and creating incentives for cooperation between industry, academia, civil society, and the public sector. Special focus areas should be innovation procurement, regulatory sandboxes, and financing of test and demo environments to ensure that new knowledge and technologies can be quickly and effectively utilised and brought to market.

## Inclusion

- Facilitate the private sector's involvement in research projects and research infrastructures across all technology readiness levels (TRL) by reducing administrative barriers and creating incentives to attract companies, especially SMEs, to participate in research collaborations.
- Make it attractive for private investors to participate in Pillar III.
- The framework programme should reduce the allocation of funds based on geographical location by addressing widening participation in a dedicated sub-programme focused on quality and impact. Strengthen the quality requirements in the selection process and ensure that widening participation aligns with the main objectives of the framework programme and contributes to European research excellence. Efforts in widening participation should focus on the countries with the greatest need, which means that the number of countries within widening participation can decrease.

- Strengthen international association and collaboration by opening up and facilitating broader participation from countries outside the EU. This should promote global knowledge sharing and innovation by leveraging a wide range of perspectives and expertise.
- To promote increased participation and inclusion in the next framework programme's calls, these should be designed with a broad and inclusive approach that allows a diversity of actors, research areas, and project types to compete on equal terms. Avoid overly specific calls to prevent excluding potentially valuable contributions from less represented areas or new actors.
- Create opportunities for end-users to participate in applied research and innovation where appropriate. End-users can, for example, be the general public, patients, municipalities, authorities, or companies. By involving these groups, the impact of the framework programme is strengthened.

## Increase the efficiency of the next framework programme

### Impact

- Develop user-friendly systems for long-term monitoring of the framework programme's efficiency and excellence. These systems should include traceable source data that allow for in-depth analysis of both failures and successes.
- Improve the implementation and monitoring of open science at all levels (European, national, and institutional) by promoting the use of reusable high-quality research data through the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). This makes research results more accessible and useful.
- Strengthen knowledge valorisation of research. Ensure that the digital objects of research are FAIR and as open as possible and that they are disseminated to authorised individuals within industry and society. This helps maximising the benefits of European research and innovation and enhance the impact of the European Research Area.
- Make the results of all funded projects easily accessible to share lessons learned more effectively. Promote synergies between national and European research efforts, as well as between the European Research Area and the European Education Area where it provides clear added value.

### Predictability

- Develop the democratic decision-making process with clear procedures to ensure Member States' influence, engagement, and foresight. Ensure that documents are shared in advance, followed by discussions and ample opportunities to draft written feedback based on meeting discussions, to maintain high quality in all configurations of the programme committee.
- Maintain a stable and predictable budget for the framework programme. All re-allocation of priorities must be well justified and accompanied by an impact assessment. Balance the flexibility requirements of Member States with sufficient planning in advance from the Commission.
- Develop the strategic planning process with clear and long-term goals. Priorities should reflect the EU's research and innovation policy and provide the research community with a stable foundation for orientation.
- Strengthen synergies between different funding instruments and programmes through better dialogue between Commission directorates.

## Simplicity

- Reduce the administrative burden. Simplify application and reporting processes by reducing bureaucracy and the number of requirements, especially for small actors and beginners. Introduce more flexible and less time-consuming reporting requirements.
- Harmonise the regulations for all instruments within the framework programme to create clarity and reduce misunderstandings. Ensure early and improved dialogue between the Commission, Member States, and associated countries to avoid duplication and increase synergies between different programmes, for example, by providing the right information at the right time to the right actor.
- Ensure that the framework programme's regulation is easy to understand and minimises the risk of misinterpretations of what the framework programme should achieve.
- Provide clear and easily accessible guidelines and support materials to navigate the framework programme for both researchers and intermediaries such as National Contact Points (NCPs). Improve the NCP function to provide better support to all actors, focusing on facilitating their navigation within the framework programme



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