

Tebes position on the next EU framework programme for research and innovation

Main priorities:

- Defining EIC's role as a European accelerator for the most promising enterprises
- Developing scalable business driven solutions for missions and societal challenges
- Involving both large and small companies in research and innovation cooperation
- Total size of FP9 should be at least 120 billion euros where two thirds should be innovation funding.

The next EU framework programme for research and innovation (FP9) is crucial to ensuring Europe's future competitiveness and welfare. By directing investment in research, development and innovation cooperation, FP9 must aim to solve societal challenges and help the best SMEs to scale up. In order to succeed, FP9 must strike a right balance between research and innovation. While research excellence is vital, it is also important to promote cooperation between industry and academia because companies help ideas to become economically and socially impactful. The identified main weakness of Europe in the field of research and innovation is the inadequate performance of getting excellent research results into the market. Therefore, it is important to develop scalable business driven solutions for missions and societal challenges. We also need new types of cooperation for solving societal challenges and for scaling up those SMEs that have the greatest potential on global markets.

Europe needs to invest seriously in its future. To this end, the total size of FP9 should increase to at least 120 billion euros. Tebes sees that at least two thirds of the FP9 funding should be directed to innovation activities.

Tebes' position on FP9 focuses on:

- The role of the European Innovation Council (EIC)
- Missions and societal challenges
- The pillar structure and some general issues.

European Innovation Council

The European Innovation Council (EIC) is an excellent initiative for scaling up the best European start-ups, SMEs and mid-caps. EIC's main focus should be in providing significant support to carefully selected breakthrough innovations. The EIC should work as an accelerator whose main goal is to help Europe to become a true scale-up continent which is able to grow our best companies into leading global players.

To achieve this goal, EIC should provide the best applicants with a tailor-made growth package. The package should include a combination of public and private funding fit for the needs of the company: grants, loans, equity and guarantees of up to tens of millions of euros in a serious scale-up. This must be complemented by top-level expertise services like coaching, mentoring, training, soft landing measures etc. In other words, EIC should act as an European Accelerator bringing all relevant EU funding and services into a single, fit-for-purpose 'one-stop-shop' for the most promising enterprises. And all these services should be provided in a fast, flexible and agile way to match market developments and opportunities.

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The European Accelerator requires a high quality deal-flow. National Innovation Agencies and EUREKA and EEN networks can play a prominent role in realising this. With national-level support activities and joint efforts, such as the Eurostars programme, companies can be developed and filtered to enter the exclusive Accelerator club. Tekes highly appreciates the European Commission's drive for closer collaboration with these partners and is willing to fully contribute to the common European effort. We have obtained valuable experience through for example our [Young Innovative Companies](#) scheme. Our approach to managing customers in a holistic way instead of through the eyes of only a project funder has also been a success. This experience and knowledge could help to attract the best companies to the EIC and to support their growth.

While EIC should logically focus on supporting breakthrough innovation for global markets, more incremental innovation also has its place in the European landscape. To this end, EIC should provide a wide variety of financial instruments for companies wanting to proceed in a more cautious way in their development. EIC should also utilize demand side instruments such as innovative public procurement for creating new markets, demonstrators and references for up-scaling globally.

Finally, it is extremely important that the innovation perspective is integrated with all parts of the FP9 programme, for instance through industry-led collaboration projects, and that innovation activities get sufficient funding on a broad front.

Mission oriented approach and societal challenges

Missions aim to solve important societal challenges through the cooperation of many different actors. Cooperation throughout business ecosystems which comprise various players and platforms is a key driver for innovation, especially of the system innovations that can deliver new solutions for societal challenges. In FP9, the benefit of the mission approach is in helping to focus the efforts of research and innovation, and in directing these efforts towards important issues. Solving societal challenges opens up large new markets to which companies have to develop scalable business driven solutions.

Missions and challenges must be defined and executed in a flexible way. Their topics and themes must not be prescribed in too much detail. Selection of new missions and challenges during FP9 is important. Certain themes such as sustainable development, circular economy, health and digitalization may be defined in a top-down manner but it is necessary to allow also combination and crosscutting of themes. This part of the framework programme should also include measures to develop European industrial leadership and key enabling technologies.

Although flexible, missions must also be clear, measurable and attainable. Clear visions, roadmaps and management of ecosystems are required. Disruptive innovations are desirable, however it must be recognized that such large, systemic changes which missions aim to achieve can also be reached incrementally. Although taking small steps towards long term visions and goals may take a long time, FP9 should encourage such progress by setting ambitious targets.

Accomplishment of missions and developing solutions to societal challenges requires the cooperation of different actors. Cooperation between industry and academia is the key. Researchers can benefit from direction that companies provide, while firms can use the knowledge and ideas that researchers provide to benefit both business and the broader society. For best impacts, companies, large and small, have to participate. Cooperation with startups and small companies helps startups and small companies to grow and large companies to renew themselves.

Platforms and system integrators also play key roles in the success of missions. Value creation depends increasingly on platforms. Data, artificial intelligence and telecommunication are also drivers for growth. We should develop and pilot new solutions and platforms in European ecosystems. The role of system integrators is especially important in connecting parts of the solutions for the missions and challenges.

The pillar structure and some general issues

In general, FP9 should focus on European added value, multilateral cooperation and impact in order to promote sustainable economic growth, job creation, competitiveness and wellbeing. In order to accomplish the aims FP9 should be based on a three pillar structure made up of:

- Pillar 1, Excellent science for the benefit of Europe
- Pillar 2, Missions and societal challenges
- Pillar 3, European Innovation Council

Excellence based research can be considered the basis of FP9. However, for getting best impact, merely excellent research is not enough. Both small and large companies should participate in research and innovation cooperation.

In addition to traditional research and innovation, a larger systemic view is needed concerning e.g. utilization of single European markets, regulation and investments. Citizens' should be involved in co-creation and we have to be able to demonstrate the wider societal targets and show the impacts of RDI to citizens.

It is important to continue promoting openness in research and innovation. Openness makes science more reproducible as well as transparent and increases its societal impact. Easy access to the latest knowledge benefits SMEs and growth companies and hence directly advances the higher competitiveness in Europe.

Major improvements have been made under H2020 to make the programme simpler and faster than its predecessors. These improvements must continue in FP9 by taking into consideration the participant view. When streamlining the administration, it is of utmost importance that the interpretation of the rules and the procedures are uniform throughout the Commission services.

To ensure that needs of the participants to the FP9 are heard, Member States need to be closely involved in the implementation of the programme. FP9 should comply with the principles of high quality and open competition without Member State or other quotas or regional criteria.

Tebes – the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation is the most important publicly funded expert organisation for financing research, development and innovation in Finland. As of January 1st, 2018 Tebes and Finpro – the Finnish trade promotion organization – will unite as Business Finland.

The foremost goal of the New Business Finland is to offer a smooth, joint service path for our customers in Finland and abroad when you need innovation funding, advice in growing internationally, investing in Finland or visiting Finland.

Business Finland's mission is to catalyze new growth and create opportunities for Finland through innovation and international expansion. Our strategy is twofold: enabling global growth for companies and creating world-class business ecosystems and competitive business environment for Finland.