



Long-Term Sustainability of RI: EU-LIFE contribution towards the workshop on 25th November 2016

EU-LIFE is strongly committed to collaborate with the European Commission and all stakeholders in the development of Long Term Sustainability policies that push Research & Innovation further and specifically contribute significantly to boosting economic growth, jobs and investment in Europe.

EU-LIFE institutes are active partners in European Research Infrastructures (RI) and ESFRI and therefore willing to take their responsibility of contributing to the Long Term Sustainability Plan now being designed. Beyond their own, individual participation, at EU-LIFE we performed an internal consultation focused on identifying key issues that our members collectively consider crucial for the future sustainability of Research Infrastructure in Europe.

In this first written contribution requested to ERA stakeholders' platform members, we highlight an overarching issue – the need to broaden the concept of RI to regional, medium and small scale research infrastructure, which are also termed scientific platforms or core facilities. Additional suggestions and recommendations from EU-LIFE will follow during the workshop and subsequent steps.

Recommendation: Broadening the concept of RI (EU level)

The ecosystem of Research Infrastructure needed to boost European capacity, jobs and economic growth comprises different levels of dimension. Currently, only large scale RI are clearly considered at European level. While setting up a sustainability plan focused solely on large RI, the European Commission might be:

- a) Underestimating the potential of innovative, emergent technologies and methodologies that are started in niche environments
- b) Narrowing the range of already installed capacity and innovation existent in small, regional scale RI and its potential contribution to medium and large scale RI
- c) Disregarding the optimisation of small or regional RI which are key to the success of the Research & Innovation ecosystem in Europe namely by providing users with the expertise and technology they need where they are and at the scale they need.
- d) Disregarding the contribution of the small scale scientific platforms to the sustainability of the overall RI needs in Europe, including the sustainability of large RIs (by serving users that otherwise eventually and needlessly overload large RI)

As such, broadening the concept of RI to smaller, regional scale of research infrastructures such as scientific platforms (also called core facilities) will enrich the ecosystem and promote uptake of already existing capacity that is currently untapped.

Therefore, we recommend that an effective sustainability plan of RI in Europe should broaden the concept of RI to clearly include small, medium and regional scale scientific platforms (or so-called core facilities) and specific measures addressed at this RI levels.

Actions that may contribute to this recommendation

1. **Create a generic support programme** that promotes the development of European-scale networks of small scale scientific platforms focusing not only on the technology per se, but on the interoperability, complementation and access of those RI. Such a programme is lacking in Europe and is key to a sustainable RI ecosystem.
2. For each condition for sustainability identified in the non-paper that is the basis of the upcoming workshop, **create opportunities to link the small, regional scale to large RI namely regarding training, talent/staff, unlocking innovative potential and best practice exchange.** In particular, EU-LIFE suggest that in the workshop the following recommendations / actions are discussed:
 - a. **Create a unique market for research managers/experts at RI at the several levels (EU level)**

To promote the availability of competent managers and technical staff, critical mass has to be reached and talent circulation fostered within Europe. This could be attained by **promoting an integrated approach to training**, i.e., expand training programmes to small and regional scale RI staff; and by promoting talent exchange between regional, small scale and large scale RI.

A possible **action** could be to set up an exchange training programme that is flexible in terms of duration, focus of visits (e.g. exchange on technical expertise, tech training, management, operations level, job shadowing, possibility several short repeat visits, etc.) and specifically addresses interactions between large and smaller scale RIs / scientific platforms.
 - b. **Promote best practice sharing at all levels (EU level)**

Learning from each other on governance and interoperability by promoting and making use of networks; and working with existing international associations (model: EU-LIFE, C4Life or others) which can contribute with knowledge and expertise to foster interoperability. For example, establish best practice exchange to ascertain governance models, investment needs, tech transfer models, etc.



A specific **action** would be to include case studies of scientific platforms to define proper share of investment in RI in the upcoming framework programme (FP9).

- c. **Promote national road maps for LTS that address co-ordinately the whole RI ecosystem from large scale to medium and small scale scientific platforms (MS level)**

Barcelona, 11th November 2016

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "M. J. ...".

EU-LIFE Coordinator