



EU-LIFE's guiding principles for FP10

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EU-LIFE's 10 guiding principles for FP10

The challenges that humankind and our planet are facing are unprecedented. While the geopolitical and social context becomes increasingly complex, a united, strong, bold and resilient European Research & Innovation programme is needed to help address these challenges successfully and to provide Europe with an economic competitive edge worldwide. For that, **European politicians must have an ambitious and yet realistic vision for FP10**, the next Research & Innovation programme, and therefore focus on strategies that bring impact in the long term.

Hereby, we put forward 10 guiding principles for FP10:

1. Be ambitious: Aim for **more impact** through FP10

This is the first and foremost principle: aim for longer term, more impactful outcomes and fewer implementation-based approaches. FP10 must be research and innovation-based, i.e. aiming for **new solutions based on cutting-edge knowledge to the current and future challenges**, not simple implementation of already existing solutions, as is too often the case currently in Horizon Europe.^{1,3}

2. Be realistic: Provide FP10 with a **budget to meet the goals**

It is essential to provide a commensurate budget for the challenges to be addressed, and to **not increase the scope of the R&I programme** without ensuring that additional budgets are allocated to new areas of the programme. For FP10 with the **current portfolio, 200 billion Euros is a minimum budget** to achieve intended goals.

Likewise, it is critical to **ring fence** the FP10 budget against annual reallocations to other programmes and initiatives, preventing the recurring issues affecting previous EU Research & Innovation programmes year after year. This safeguarding is crucial to ensure the mid and long-term impacts of the research outcomes⁸⁻¹⁰.

3. Rebalance **public and private funding** in FP10 and promote a solid EIC model

Due to its nature, it is challenging for the private sector to invest strongly in high impact/high risk discovery-driven research (low TRLs) - this should be the main role of public funding. Therefore, **public funding through FP10** needs to **focus on high impact/high risk research and innovation** while **promoting private sector investment** in the development and implementation of research findings (higher TRLs). This principle must be applied to all Pillars of FP10, including recognition of the vital bridging role of the European Innovation Council (EIC) in **fostering efficient collaboration between excellent research and innovation**, thereby providing the means for a smooth transition from ideas and scientific results to the innovation process.^{2,3}

4. Raise the investment in the **European Research Council (ERC)**

The role of groundbreaking research in overcoming the recent pandemic is a solid illustration of the long-term, high impact of excellent research. However, it is undisputable that lack of funding for the ERC is currently locking up groundbreaking, disruptive research potential in Europe, as attested by the critically low success rates of the ERC and the concomitant high number of outstanding proposals (unfunded A-rated proposals) left without funding, call after call. This untapped potential is impairing the leading role of Europe in research and innovation. For FP10, this is a quick win: **raise the investment in the ERC and allocate a higher percentage of the FP10 funding to the ERC** - this will deliver higher impact in the medium to long term.^{1,2}

5. **FP10 structure**: Avoid creating unnecessary additional pillars and fragmentation

FP10 does not need additional pillars compared to Horizon Europe, this would introduce unnecessary complexity. Instead, FP10 should be designed to promote more extensively synergies across Pillars to support projects at different stages of maturity with concrete actions. Besides extending the already existing schemes, such as for example between Pillar 1 and Pillar 3 to allow for broader ERC to EIC transition, new synergistic opportunities should be created, such as for example between Pillar 1 and 2.

Creation of synergies must be made in true co-creation mode with the involvement of relevant stakeholders, namely researchers and innovators.

6. Develop strongly collaborative research by raising collaborative opportunities for discovery-driven research

Ensure that FP10 creates **real opportunities for collaborative research at European level**, which Member States alone cannot do. The ERC, EIC and MSCA are critical for the scientific excellence of Europe, but they cannot focus on promoting large research consortia across Europe. For Europe to lead worldwide and clearly address global challenges such as in health and climate change, FP10 must also **promote discovery-driven approaches in Pillar 2 with large research consortia** across Europe. It is also key that promotion of research collaboration is not restricted by types of organizations (e.g. as in European University Alliances) - excellent researchers must be free to collaborate with the best match for their scientific projects irrespective of the type of organization / alliance they are affiliated with. ^{1,3,4}

7. Invest in more bottom-up, less politically driven topic calls and ensure that the impact of generating knowledge is promoted when addressing global challenges

In Horizon Europe - and especially in Pillar 2 -, too many topic calls are either not primarily research focused (e.g. the Cancer Mission, Health cluster), aiming instead at high level stakeholders, and/or are very political in nature (e.g. the Cancer mission). In FP10, this must change and the key contribution of generating knowledge in fundamental and innovative aspects underlying global challenges must be recognized and promoted. **This means a clear promotion and inclusion of lower TRLs and bottom-up approaches in global challenges calls.** ³⁻⁶

8. Develop a coherent impact approach by reducing the size of consortia and monitoring the impact of initiatives in Pillar 2

Currently, consortia are too big and need to cover a too-wide range of areas, which limits the participation of researchers and innovators – in particular the possibility for them to take the lead in such projects. Instead of aiming for projects that are unrealistic and/or too hard to execute, FP10 should **promote flexibility on the size of the consortia** and, in particular, **reduce the size of consortia** in projects addressing global challenges. Likewise, FP10 should aim for a **portfolio approach of impact**, rather than focusing on a small number of very large projects, and ensure careful monitoring of the impact of the programmes before widespread use of them. For example, the real, long-term **impact of missions needs to be carefully assessed** before implementing them as a core component of FP10. ³⁻⁶

9. Bring researchers and their institutions back to the centre of European Programmes of Research and Innovation.

There is a crucial need to attract and retain talent in research, research technology and management. In FP10, **invest more in people** - namely in research careers, attractiveness of careers in research -, effective **knowledge transfer**, cutting-edge **research infrastructures** and in a **diverse, inclusive, fair and attractive ecosystem**. In particular, give the transformative power and incentives to the community and their institutions: bring back **bottom-up schemes for research organizations** to develop their capacity - as opposed to too much policy, EC-centred schemes (especially such as those in WIDERA in Horizon Europe).

10. Excellence has no institutional borders: Improve capacity support of research institutions in an equitable, fair and diverse way

The more diverse the R&I ecosystem – with agile research institutes, larger universities and cutting-edge research infrastructures –, **the more robust** it is to foster scientific excellence and innovation. Therefore, ensure that **capacity building initiatives** in FP10 are **open and on equal terms** for all research organizations such as research institutes, universities and research infrastructures. In particular, do not extend the use of European University Alliances as a main go-to tool to support capacity building in research and innovation, as they include a very small percentage of research institutions across Europe.

Relevant EU-LIFE position papers and statements (referenced in the text)

Horizon Europe strategy

¹ [EU-LIFE answer to the Public Consultation of EU R&I Programmes 2014 – 2027](#)

² [EU-LIFE wants a more balanced FP9](#)

Pillar II Health Cluster

³ [How to ensure health safety in Europe: the vision of EU-LIFE research institutes](#)

⁴ [EU-LIFE calls for impactful collaborative research in European Biomedicine](#)

Pillar II Cancer Mission

⁵ [Reaction of EU-LIFE: Cancer Mission work programme 2021-22](#)

⁶ [EU-LIFE recommendations to the Cancer Mission draft](#)

Research Infrastructures

⁷ [Call for action on small and medium research infrastructures in Europe](#)

Horizon Europe budget

⁸ [Reaction of EU-LIFE to the next framework programme budget agreement](#)

⁹ [Europe needs Research & Innovation to address the future: EU-LIFE reaction to the EU Council deal](#)

¹⁰ [Open letter to the EU Council and the European Parliament to prioritise R&I by committing an appropriate budget for Horizon Europe](#)



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