

Guidelines on

Coordinating
the Research Framework Programme
and the Structural Funds to support
Research and Development

Elaborated by the CREST Working Group on
"How to achieve better coordinated use of Framework
Programme and Structural Funds to support R&D"

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Knowledge lies at the heart of the European Union's Lisbon Strategy to become the "most dynamic competitive knowledge-based economy in the world". This aim gives orientation to European Union (EU) policies among which are the EU cohesion and the EU research policies. Cohesion policies are dedicated to supporting economic and social cohesion, reducing disparities between European regions and promoting growth and employment. EU research policy aims at supporting excellent research and development activities and establishing the European Research Area (ERA) to enable successful competition on a global scale.

Two important European instruments to support these policies are the Structural Funds (including the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund) for cohesion policy and the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development for research policy.

Even though these instruments are designed to reflect different EU policies, by working together they can help to mobilise research and technological development potential at regional, national and European level, and contribute to regional economic and social development much more effectively than if they were employed separately. Thus coordinated use of the Structural Funds and the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development can help to achieve the aims of the Lisbon Strategy.

On the basis of the mandate given by the Scientific and Technical Research Committee of the European Union (CREST) in October 2006, the CREST Working Group on "How to achieve better coordinated use of Framework Programme and Structural Funds to support R&D" has elaborated guidelines including 14 recommendations. The work has been carried out in the context of the 3rd cycle of the Open Method of Coordination in support of the Barcelona target to improve and increase investment in research to 3% of GDP by 2010 in the EU.

The recommendations for better coordinated use of the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP) and the Structural Funds (SF) to support R&D are the following:

Develop Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) strategies and strengthen the governance

1. Develop a specific strategy for coordinated use of FP and SF as part of your RTDI strategy. Consider using FP and SF together for research and innovation strategy development.
2. Focus your RTDI strategy on selected themes building on the strengths and weaknesses of the territory, bearing in mind development trends indicated by FP and its thematic approach.
3. Organise the strategic development of your RTDI system as a learning process: use FP and SF exchange and networking opportunities both at the regional, national and European level.

Strengthen and develop the RTDI basis

4. Use FP and SF for the development of human resources in research and development, by supporting education and training schemes and by improving the education system to better meet the needs of the economy and society.
5. Use both FP and SF to build or upgrade research infrastructures and to connect them at European level.

Develop RTDI Excellence

6. Exploit the impetus provided by FP to cultivate and boost R&D: use FP and SF to promote research excellence.
7. Use FP and SF to improve networking between research institutes, universities, enterprises and other relevant actors and to foster the development of clusters and poles.
8. Use SF to promote the scientific, technological, entrepreneurial and managerial capacity of regional actors and thereby increase their capacity to participate in the FP.

Develop R&D cooperation at European and international level

9. Use the potential of FP and SF in terms of transnational and international networking and R&D cooperation to connect the regional or national research system to international networks and trends in Europe and beyond.

Strengthen the exploitation and economic and social valorisation of R&D results

10. Use FP and SF for valorising research results, achieving an easy and open access to knowledge and transferring the knowledge produced under FP into economic or societal use.
11. Use FP and SF to strengthen the role of SMEs in research and development and their capacities to exploit knowledge.
12. Use FP and SF to get researchers more involved in development activities and business creation: promoting transfer of personnel from academia to companies and vice versa, IPR exploitation and the setting up of new research and knowledge-based enterprises.

Improve communication and information

13. Make sure that actors involved in delivering FP and SF know about the opportunities offered by the other instrument. Support communication and create interfaces between the two communities.
14. Make sure that information on FP and SF is available and easily accessible for the potential applicants of both instruments. Be aware of different needs depending on the type of the possible beneficiaries i.e. research institutes, SME, large enterprises, etc.

1. Mandate of the CREST Working Group and scope of the Guidelines

To contribute to a better coordinated use of the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP) and the Structural Funds (SF) the **Working Group on "How to make better coordinated use of Framework Programme and Structural Funds to support R&D"** of the Scientific and Technical Research Committee of the EU (CREST) has elaborated the present guidelines. The work has been carried out in the context of the 3rd cycle of the Open Method of Coordination in support of the 3% Barcelona objective and is the result of an intense discussion among the members of the Working Group, where 19 Member States were represented by their delegates (List of Working Group members in Annex IV). The work began in November 2006 and ended in April 2007. Cooperation has been established with the Structural Funds Working Group of the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) ¹.

The recommendations have been drafted according to the following considerations:

- The recommendations aim at highlighting the scope for complementarities within the conditions set by the current legislation governing the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7) and SF.
- The recommendations focus on the coordinated use of FP and SF. Other relevant instruments, such as the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP), the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and the EU Educational Programmes are outside the scope of the activity of the WG, even though it recognises their importance in relation to this topic.
- Many recommendations are the result of a forward looking exercise aimed at identifying opportunities that have not been experienced yet but are offered by the two instruments starting from 2007. This is due to various reasons. Firstly very limited evidence exists on their operational and strategic coordination, secondly, several practices that have been observed are based on the individual initiatives of the private sector or the managing authorities and implementing organisations of the Member States, and thirdly, the new regulations of the SF as well as FP7 offer new opportunities that did not exist in the previous periods.
- The recommendations aim at providing a general guidance on how coordination may take place. However, each region and Member State will need to adapt the recommendations and explore further opportunities bearing in mind the specific priorities and peculiarities of the territory and the regional and national networks within which they operate.
- The recommendations are intended to contribute to the current broader debate launched by the recent Green Paper on the European Research Area², mainly by emphasising the need for coordinated use of the different instruments supporting the development of the European Research Area (ERA).

The CREST Working Group welcomes the conclusions of the 19th February 2007 Competitiveness Council which invites the Commission to present a concept for efficient coordination of the 7th Research Framework

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/eurab/index_en.html

² Green Paper The European Research Area: New Perspectives. Brussels, 4.4.2007 COM(2007) 161 final.

Programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the Structural Funds by June 2007 and invites Member States and the Commission to continue working on the identification and dissemination of good practices for optimal and complementary use of the Structural Funds and other Community programmes.

The CREST Working Group is confident that the work carried out and results obtained will contribute to this process and invites regions, Member States and other relevant actors at regional, national and European level to take into account the guidelines that have been elaborated in view of better using the Research Framework Programme and the Structural Funds for improving research and development performance thus contributing to regional economic and social development.

2. Background

Knowledge lies at the heart of the European Union's Lisbon Strategy to become the "most dynamic competitive knowledge-based economy in the world". The 'knowledge triangle' - research, education and innovation - is at the core of European efforts to meet the ambitious Lisbon goals. The European Union (EU) applies different policies to achieve these aims, among which are the EU cohesion and the EU research policies.

The **research policy** aims at supporting excellent research and development activities and establishing the European Research Area (ERA). The ERA's goal is to address the needs of the scientific community, business and citizens by means of an adequate flow of competent researchers, world class research infrastructures, excellent research institutions, effective knowledge sharing, well coordinated research programmes and priorities and world wide cooperation.³

The **cohesion policy** is dedicated to supporting economic and social cohesion, reducing disparities between European regions and promoting growth and employment: territorial cohesion, and mainly the development of the least developed regions and those experiencing serious structural change, is the primary focus. In accordance with the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs of the renewed Lisbon agenda, cohesion policy targets the following three priorities: (a) improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving the environment; (b) encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new ICT, and (c) creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.⁴

Two important European instruments for the support of these policies are the FP for research policy, and the SF for cohesion policy (see Annex I for basic information on the two instruments).

³ Green Paper The European Research Area: New Perspectives. Brussels, 4.4.2007 COM(2007) 161 final

⁴ Council decision of 6 October 2006 on Community Strategic Guidelines on cohesion (2006/702/EC)

The Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7)⁵ runs from 2007 to 2013 and has a budget of €54 billion dedicated mainly to transnational collaborative research projects. The Structural Funds, including the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund⁶, run for the same 2007-2013 period and have a budget of €308 billion. Out of this more than 10% is expected to be spent on a broad range of research and innovation related actions by regions and Member States. Together with national co-financing, SF are expected to provide funds for research and innovation on at least the same scale as the FP. A non exhaustive list of typical actions funded by each instrument is presented in the following box.

Typical activities carried out under FP7:	Typical RDTI related activities carried out under SF:
<p>Collaborative research projects (thematically oriented) to develop new knowledge, new technology, products, demonstration activities or common resources for research, carried out by consortia with participants from different countries,</p> <p>Networks of Excellence to support a Joint Programme of Activities implemented by a number of research organisations integrating their activities in a given field, training measures, joint research agendas, network activities.</p> <p>Coordinating or supporting research activities: networking, exchanges, trans-national access to research infrastructures, studies, conferences, cluster development.</p> <p>'Frontier' (basic-oriented) research projects, carried out by individual national or transnational research teams.</p> <p>Career development and international mobility of researchers: individual fellowships, industry - academia exchanges, excellence grants.</p> <p>Research projects carried out by universities or research centres, for the benefit in particular to SMEs. ⁷</p>	<p>Strengthening research and technological development capacities, and their integration in the ERA</p> <p>Support for research and innovation infrastructures, equipment and instruments</p> <p>Aid to R&TD projects, notably in SMEs and in cooperation between enterprises and research institutes</p> <p>Public-private partnerships for R&D and clusters.</p> <p>Support for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation</p> <p>Improvement of links between SMEs, tertiary education institutions, research institutions and research and technology centres.</p> <p>Promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and business start-ups</p> <p>Support for regional research and innovation strategies, SWOT studies, technology audits and regional foresight methods etc.</p> <p>Promoting lifelong learning, developing qualifications and competences, increased participation in education and training</p> <p>Development of human potential in research and innovation, postgraduate studies and training of researchers</p> <p>Dissemination of ICT, e-learning and eco-friendly technologies</p> <p>Networking of higher education institutions, research and technological centres and enterprises ⁸</p>

⁵ Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013), Annex III

⁶ Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999; Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999. Council Regulation No. 1084/2006 of 11 July 2006 establishing a Cohesion Fund and repealing regulation (EC) No 1164/94

⁷ Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013), Annex III

⁸ Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999, Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999

FP and SF can thus finance research and development activities. However, the underlying policy logic differs: the EU research policy focuses primarily on excellence with the perspective of global competitiveness, while the EU cohesion policy aims at ensuring that less developed regions and regions confronted with serious structural change can improve and contribute to European competitiveness. The two policies tend also to address different beneficiary groups: the applicants to FP are usually actors with the highest potential for excellence in research and belong to regions which usually make limited use of SF. Vice versa those regions receiving aid for convergence objectives participate less than the other regions in the FP.

Nonetheless a growing potential for **coordination** between the two instruments exists, with opportunities to reinforce each other's interventions. By working together they can help to mobilise research and technological development potential at regional, national and European level, improve and increase R&D investment in research (in view of the 3% Barcelona target) and contribute to regional economic and social development much more effectively than if they were employed separately. Thus coordinated use of Structural Funds and Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development can help to achieve the aims of the Lisbon Strategy.

The need for coordination was already recognised in the 2005 Spring European Council when the European Commission was requested to "mobilise all appropriate national and Community resources (...) so as better to tap into their synergies in a general context of sustainable development." Following this approach, on the one hand the Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013 on Cohesion Policy, besides identifying research as a key priority for growth and job creation, state that: "Synergy between cohesion policy and these instruments (FP and CIP) is vital and national and regional development strategies must show how this will be achieved."⁹ On the other hand the decision on FP7 states that "The Seventh Framework Programme complements the activities carried out in the Member States as well as other Community actions that are necessary for the overall strategic effort to achieve the Lisbon goal, alongside in particular those under the Structural Funds (...)." ¹⁰

Coordination between FP and SF can take place by means of **complementary funding** that is using the two instruments for funding complementary activities. In the case of SF this must be specifically foreseen in the strategic or operational programmes of the countries/regions willing to coordinate the two instruments, as part of the more general national/regional strategy for socio-economic development. FP and SF can thus finance different sets of actions and related costs, in such a way that they mutually reinforce their effects and help to achieve better and more sustainable results. This is the only possible coordination option, as double-funding from different sources or co-financing with different EU Community funds of the same expenditure is prohibited (see Annex II for more details on the differences between complementary funding, co-financing and double financing).

⁹ Council decision of 6 October 2006 on Community Strategic Guidelines on cohesion (2006/702/EC)

¹⁰ Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013)

3. Starting conditions for coordinated use of FP and SF to support R&D

When discussing the potential coordination between SF and FP to support R&D, one has to keep in mind that the two instruments stem from different policy objectives and this is reflected in several differences that can be identified:

- Thematic focus: FP has a strong thematic focus aiming at research (with 10 thematic priority areas in the Cooperation Specific Programme), while SF have a broad range of economic and social interventions responding to regional needs, the thematic focus being established by each Operational Programme (OP).
- Geographical dimension: the geographical target of SF is the European regions, in particular the less developed ones. SF have a strong territorial dimension and a limited possibility to operate outside a region's borders. FP on the contrary has a clear transnational focus.
- Governing mechanism and procedures: FP is designed and managed by the European Commission (EC) in consultation with the Member States (MS), while cohesion policy programmes are drawn up on the basis of partnership between the EC and the MS and implemented by regional and national authorities. Overall managing, monitoring, evaluation and control procedures are different.
- Different administrative and policy units are involved in the management and implementation of the two instruments. The competencies of the regions as far as research and innovation related issues are concerned differ between Member States.

Nevertheless, there is a significant potential and opportunities for better coordinated use of SF and FP within the present legal framework of the two instruments based mainly on the following factors:

- With the new 2007-2013 programming period the time frame of the two funding schemes has become the same, which makes for an easier coordinated use of the two programmes.
- SF have been emphasising the role of research and innovation as a crucial factor for regional development. With the Lisbon strategy and the strategic guidelines on cohesion¹¹ this emphasis has been reinforced.
- FP has been taking the role of the national and regional levels into account. With the new FP7 the regional dimension is becoming more important compared to FP6.
- In comparison to the previous programming period, the new SF Operational Programmes are more strategic documents that make it possible to undertake new initiatives –within the approved OPs priorities- according to upcoming policy needs, thus offering scope to the regions to take these guidelines into consideration.

The following chapter presents the recommendations elaborated by the CREST Working Group in detail.

¹¹ Council decision of 6 October 2006 on Community Strategic Guidelines on cohesion (2006/702/EC)

4. Recommendations for the coordinated use of FP and SF to support R&D

Research and innovation activities take place within **research, technological development and innovation (RTDI) systems** that are composed of different elements: research, education, industry, intermediary and service organisations, as well as the public sector. A well functioning RTDI system is characterised by a balanced presence of and a smooth interaction among all these elements, and the existence of favourable framework conditions. **Coordinated use of FP and SF** can contribute to the development of RTDI systems and in particular to:

- **Develop RTDI strategies and strengthen the governance**: A comprehensive RTDI strategy is an important tool to undertake and coordinate actions – and actors – for the development of an RTDI system. FP and SF offer support for the development, implementation and assessment of RTDI strategies, taking into consideration also a coordinated use of FP and SF. (Recommendations 1 to 3).
- **Strengthen and develop the RTDI basis**: Human resources and research infrastructure are two central pillars for the development of RTDI systems. SF contribute to build, mainly in less developed regions, the physical and human capacity to undertake research, while FP7 connects regional actors to European and global knowledge communities. (Recommendations 4 and 5).
- **Develop RTDI excellence**: Developing the quality of the RTDI system to the level of international competitiveness is essential. Both FP and SF offer opportunities to build up excellence, with FP focusing on promoting European and international collaboration of excellent quality and SF on strengthening the research and technological development capacities. (Recommendations 6 to 8).
- **Develop R&D cooperation at European and international level**: The sustainable efficiency of RTDI systems needs connections to international networks and trends at European level and beyond. The coordinated use of FP and SF provides opportunities to this respect. (Recommendation 9).
- **Strengthen the exploitation and economic utilisation of R&D results**: To achieve the aims of the Lisbon strategy, it is important to develop new products, processes and services from research knowledge. Valorising results and transferring knowledge to the economy can become more efficient when using FP and SF in a coordinated way. (Recommendations 10 to 12).
- **Improve communication and information**: Crucial elements for better coordination of FP and SF – as well as for the whole functioning of the RTDI system – are information availability and good communication among actors. These are needed to establish links between the FP and SF “communities” and are preconditions for better coordination. (Recommendation 13 and 14).

Each recommendation is composed of a short statement – bold and in a box, followed by an explanation of the rationale and some ideas and suggestions for the coordinated use of the two instruments. Concrete examples are also provided, whenever possible, together with a synthetic scenario for the coordinated use of FP and SF.

4.1 Develop RTDI strategies and strengthen the governance

An RTDI strategy is first of all a **tool to coordinate** the different efforts aiming at the development of an RTDI system. Depending on the regional situation, the profile and priorities of the strategy can vary widely: in some

territories, the development of a competitive RTDI system from the basics is required, whilst others can rely on a strong basis and work on its upgrading and strengthening should be carried out. A strategy should also provide means for coordinating and integrating the activities of the different actors involved, namely universities, research institutions, enterprises, technology centres, funding agencies, investors, intermediary and service organisations, regional and local development agencies and policy makers. A strategic approach to the development of RTDI activities if broadly based, includes also the support of a research and innovation culture in the country or region.

An RTDI strategy is important for two reasons: firstly, a national or regional specific **RTDI strategy forms the framework** within which a coherent set of actions can be implemented and valorised, using FP and SF in a coordinated way. An overarching strategic orientation helps to identify the specific role of FP and SF in supporting national or regional R&D. Secondly, the research and innovation strategy can include a **specific strategy for coordinating SF and FP**.

Recommendation 1

Develop a specific strategy for coordinated use of FP and SF as part of your RTDI strategy. Consider using FP and SF together for research and innovation strategy development.

The survey carried out among the CREST Working Group members indicates that a specific strategy for the coordinated use of FP and SF is missing in several cases. A coordination of FP and SF can be best pursued within a strategic approach, in order to exploit the opportunities offered by the two instruments in terms of complementarities and synergies. An initial SWOT analysis should be the starting point. A clear understanding of the specific characteristics, capabilities and needs of each region is necessary, in order to define an appropriate strategy, foresee the most appropriate actions and use the two instruments accordingly. Based on such a strategy, one can focus, prioritize, select and concentrate resources on the concrete steps to be taken with the relevant stakeholders.

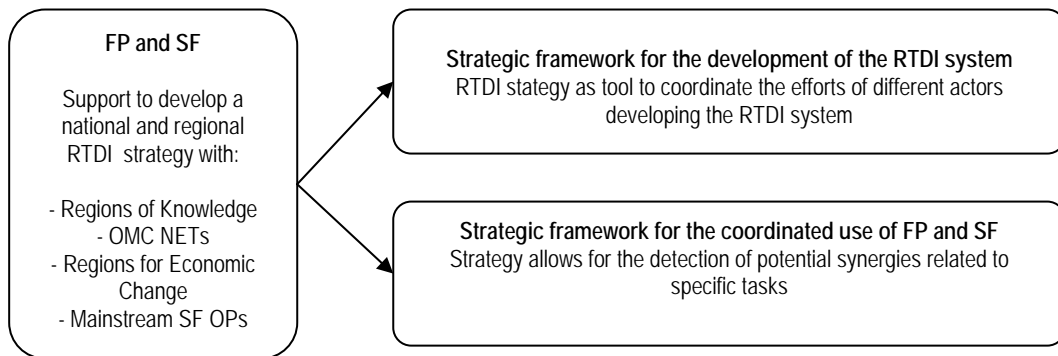
Both FP and SF do not replace the strategic planning to be undertaken at national or regional level, but provide fora for exchange and learning, thus supporting the development of national and regional innovation strategies. There are specific initiatives under both FP and SF for the exchange on strategies:

- Under FP, the Regions of Knowledge (RoK) and the OMC NET call offer a platform for exchanging experiences, policy learning and building together development strategies. As for RoK, it has among its objectives to set up common research agendas in a certain field for the participating regions. These research agendas should feed back to research policy in the region and contribute to building up the territorial strengths.
- Under SF, inter-regional cooperation is foreseen, within which the Regions for Economic Change (REC) initiative provides opportunities for exchange between regions on several issues including the development of regional innovation strategies. In some cases, the SF mainstream programmes also offer this opportunity.

EXPERIENCES

The Food Innovation Network Europe (FINE) aims at the development of strategies, tools and policies to increase regional investments in RTD in the food sector. FINE is funded by the EU through 'Regions of Knowledge 2' within the Sixth Framework Programme. FINE started with building food-related RTD networks in each region involved (in BE, PL,NL, DK, SE, ES, UK and I) including policy makers, companies, research institutes and intermediate organisations. In some regions networks already existed, in other regions these had to be built up. These regional networks are essential for developing and implementing sector policy recommendations and building interregional projects, and should also be able to develop regional actions within the scope of the Structural Funds. Each region has its own funding framework for stimulating research and innovation and also has access to Structural Funds. The latter could be used to further develop knowledge clusters within the region. In particular, recommendations could lead to implementing plans referring, among others, to Structural Funds. Moreover, FINE is developing an Action Plan with interregional projects connecting its stakeholders further in view of applying to the FP7.

SCENARIOS



Recommendation 2

Focus your RTDI strategy on selected themes building on the strengths and weaknesses of the territory, bearing in mind development trends indicated by FP and its thematic approach.

A regional strategy has to be thematically focused to be effective and efficient. The successful development of the RTDI system is based on developing existing strengths towards a competitive critical mass, but also creating new capacities in fields not yet well developed, or trying to overcome weaknesses. A thematic focus can be set at the level of specific technology fields, but also on specific components of the national/regional RTDI system, namely research and education, intermediaries or the industry.

FP7 has pre-determined budgets for thematic priorities and in this sense a thematic focus already defined at the European level. Below that, detailed research fields are indicated in the Specific Work Programmes and calls. SF on the other hand indicate guidelines for action in the field of RTD that are expressed in the strategic guidelines on cohesion, while thematic focus is established by each OP on the basis of the main characteristics, potential and development profile of each country and region.

- When identifying thematic priorities at national and regional level, the research areas defined by the FP should be regarded as options to be taken into consideration, as they indicate main trends of research at the European level and beyond. FP can provide orientation and inspiration to the definition of the regional strategies' thematic focus. But also other elements of the FP like the European Technology Platforms (ETP)

with their Strategic Research Agendas can be seen as indicators for the most important technological trends. The Joint Technology Initiatives, based on selected ETPs, are being further developed to public-private partnership, marking technology fields with development potential.

- Coherence of thematic priorities will allow for the establishment of a bridge between RTDI activities carried out at the local level and the possibility of access to the FP. This connection between FP and SF can help to make a more efficient use of the available funding.

EXPERIENCES

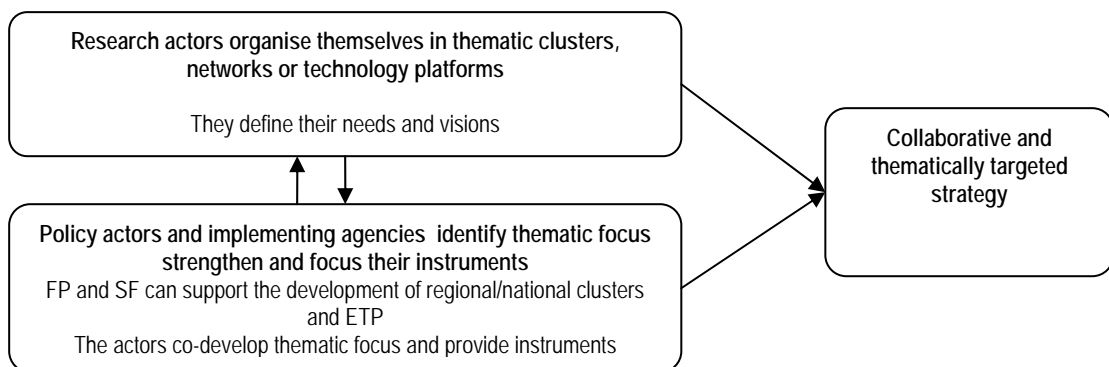
Example 1:

In some regions, the research areas defined by the FP have been taken into consideration when defining thematic priorities. This has been done in order to establish a coherence of activities carried out at the local level and to provide the opportunity to make a step forward towards a European scale of local R&D activities. In Emilia-Romagna (I), for example, FP6 thematic priorities have influenced the definition of the regional ones, looking at the European priorities as guidelines to be taken into account, but considering also the specific characteristics of the regional economic and social tissue. As for Estonia, the thematic priorities of its Research & Development & Innovation strategy and of the NSRF align with FP7 ones. The definition of thematic priorities for Greek Operational Programmes took into account those of the FP. The same goes for Romania: the Sectoral Operational Programme of ERDF "Increasing economic competitiveness" including RTDI activities include several topics common to FP7 that have been used as a source of inspiration.

Example 2:

An example of a successful strategy in technological priorities development is the establishment of biotechnology in the German Free State of Saxony. The region very successfully attracted enormous investment in this sector in the 1990s - both in industry and research organisations. Although there was a number of starting elements for biotechnology in the region, they were far from international competitiveness. A coordinated effort and significant investment in research capacities financed by ERDF as well as technology transfer created the core of a lively biotech-cluster which meanwhile is developing very dynamically, both in relation to research and education and in relation to industry. Partners from this cluster are very successful in acquiring research funds from different sources. Under FP6 they participated for example in the life science project "Cardioworkbench".

SCENARIOS



Recommendation 3

Organise the strategic development of your RTDI system as a learning process: use FP and SF exchange and networking opportunities both at the regional, national and European level.

Strategy development for the RTDI system is not a once-off activity. It is an ongoing process of continuous learning and improvement. FP and SF can support this in several ways.

- The development of RTDI systems is strongly dependent on future development trends that may affect strengths and opportunities, and quick reactions are necessary considering the speed of changes, particularly in the research field. Foresight and horizon scanning tools, as well as technology assessment and technology watch, can be used for this purpose, not only in the design of the strategy (as already mentioned in Recommendation 1), but also in its update. FP and SF offer a range of experience with these kind of tools. Take these experiences into account.
- Evaluation and impact assessment of the actions undertaken should also be taken into account and results must be used and learnt from for the next policy cycle. Evaluation experience collected under SF can help to develop the evaluation system. A specific effort should be devoted to evaluate the effectiveness of the coordinated use of available funds, taking into account the different actors involved, their objectives and experiences.
- The RTDI system should function as a learning system that continuously takes in new evidence and is adjusted on the basis of experience: this is essential to achieve sustainable success. The learning process can take advantage of the experience accumulated at the local level, but also from what has been carried out in other EU regions. FP and SF offer a number of opportunities in this respect. In particular, regions can draw on the experience of several FP projects (mainly the Regions of Knowledge scheme but also the OMC NET), and INTERREG III as well as Innovative Actions of SF. A better circulation of information on the results of such projects within and outside the regions directly involved could be useful.
- The learning process should also lead to the development of and experimentation with new instruments. SF offer specific funds to pilot new funding schemes, like for instance new tools for financial engineering or new approaches to support the development of stable networks. The room for experimentation offered under SF can help to develop the toolkit to support RTDI systems development. Important experience can also be learned from pilot projects under FP or Innovative Actions from the last SF programming period.

EXPERIENCES

Example 1:

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV, D) supported four regional networks of excellent research of the universities together with SMEs, the so-called regional Research Focal Points (RFP), co-financed by ERDF. Developing and implementing these regional RTDI strategies was strongly influenced by the experiences gained in the working group UPGRADE of the FP6 supported exercise "Blueprints for Foresight Actions in the Regions"(2003-2004). Now MV participates in a FP6 Regions of Knowledge 2 action "Foresight Lab" (together with Emilia-Romagna, West-Pommerania and Skåne). This action provides a forum for further lessons learnt in designing and implementing RTDI strategies, - and for improving the RFP concept.

Example 2:

The Interreg IIC-Project FUTURREG (www.futurreg.net) is designed to have significant long-term impacts on regional development policies, especially by ensuring that policies -and regional development organisations- are informed by high-quality forward looking tools and participatory processes, including Horizon Scanning, Trend Analysis, Scenarios, Visionary Management and Delphi. The FUTURREG inter-regional value comes from bringing the knowledge and experience of the partners to produce a regional "futures toolkit" that can also be applied in other EU regions. The futures toolkit will help regional authorities to face some of the most important regional development questions, such as: What are the main trends that will affect the prospects of the regions? What is their capacity to deal with those trends? How can they build the necessary regional partnerships to face the challenges? These experiences and regional insights are brought into Framework Programme projects by some of the partners involved. They bring to this SF project their experience with FP projects like Meta-Foresight (Regions of Knowledge Pilot Action), eFORESEE (FP5), SF Innovative Actions or the ERA-Net project ForSociety, thus strengthening the regional perspective with European projects.

4.2 Strengthen and develop the RTDI basis

Well trained researchers and powerful research institutions with **up to date equipment** are the necessary basis for a competitive RTDI system. But even when there are excellent researchers and institutions in place the development of capacities is an on-going task. For instance, the adaptation to new trends in research and technological development requires support even when a competitive research community exists. Both FP and SF offer a broad portfolio of supporting measures for the development of the basic elements of the national/regional RTDI system.

Recommendation 4

Use FP and SF for the development of human resources in research and development, by supporting education and training schemes and by improving the education system to better meet the needs of the economy and society.

Highly-skilled, excellent research personnel is central for carrying out high-level research, but there is also a need for well trained staff in other fields, such as technical staff for private and public laboratories and research and management staff in enterprises. It has always been a task of education and employment policies to adapt education and training systems to changing economic needs, and this becomes more evident in the knowledge economies, when knowledge and capacities of people are key factors. Both FP and SF -mainly through the European Social Fund- offer opportunities for the education and training of research and development staff in universities, research institutes or enterprises, including lifelong learning.

- As for FP, the Marie-Curie actions, under the People specific programme, offer a set of instruments: fellowships, grants, awards and chairs can be funded in different ways, but also training networks and courses can be funded. These instruments target initial training as well as lifelong learning. Besides, for convergence and outermost regions, Research potential, under the Capacities specific programme, also offers opportunities to improve the staff skills of research centres through secondments, recruitment and participation to international conferences.
- Over the last years, the qualifications of highly-skilled workers have received more and more attention in labour market policy. ESF can contribute to the training and education of high-skilled technical and research staff. Instruments such as the funding of PhD grants are possible under SF with the aim of supporting

knowledge development and use.

- In addition, SF can contribute to the development of education and training systems. Universities, as key actors in the education of highly-skilled research personnel, are important partners in this task. SF can support RTDI activities by ensuring that the education and training systems can adapt quickly to new needs.
- Contrast brain drain and facilitate circulation of R&D human capital.

EXPERIENCES

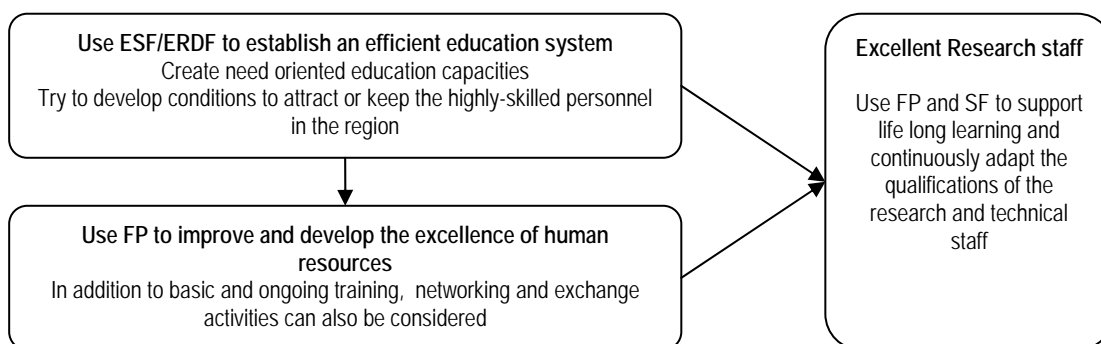
Example 1

In Baden-Württemberg (D) the ESF is co-financing a mentoring programme for women in science and research through a network of several universities (MuT). Within Europe, Germany has one of the lowest numbers of women in regular professorships and as coordinators of European projects. The target groups are students close to graduation, doctoral students, post-docs and researchers. The aim is to support women researchers in their career advancement and retain excellent women in the research system. Parts of the mentoring process are training courses on network activities, research management and planning, acquisition of research funding and detailed information on the national and European research programmes. The German Federal Ministry for Education and Research finances, within its NCP Network, the contact point "Women in EU Research" (national funding). This contact point prepares the research of the MuT mentoring programme (and other mentoring schemes throughout Germany) for FP participation through step-by-step training (programme information, project preparation, rules of participation, project management, etc). The focus lies in the participation in the thematic oriented research of FP and the Marie Curie actions. The whole concept of the MuT mentoring scheme will now be extended to several European countries, through a successful FP6 project presented by the organisers within the "Women and Science" topic in the Science and Society programme of FP6 (Capacities strand in FP7).

Example 2

In Greece SF have been used to support mobility schemes aiming at attracting researchers from abroad to Greece. The programme "Career offer to Greek-speaking researchers from abroad" (1997 - 2000) was aimed at inviting young Greek-speaking researchers from abroad to Greek laboratories for 3-4 years. The Programme provided finance to Greek Universities and public research institutions to host researchers in selected areas. Subsequently, an advanced scheme has been launched during the programming period 2000-2006. This programme, entitled "Programme for incorporation of foreign PhD researchers into the Greek RTD system", was not addressed exclusively to Greek-speaking researchers but it was open to all foreign researchers wishing to work in Greek laboratories for short to medium term stays.

SCENARIOS



Recommendation 5

Use both FP and SF to build or upgrade research infrastructures and to connect them at European level.

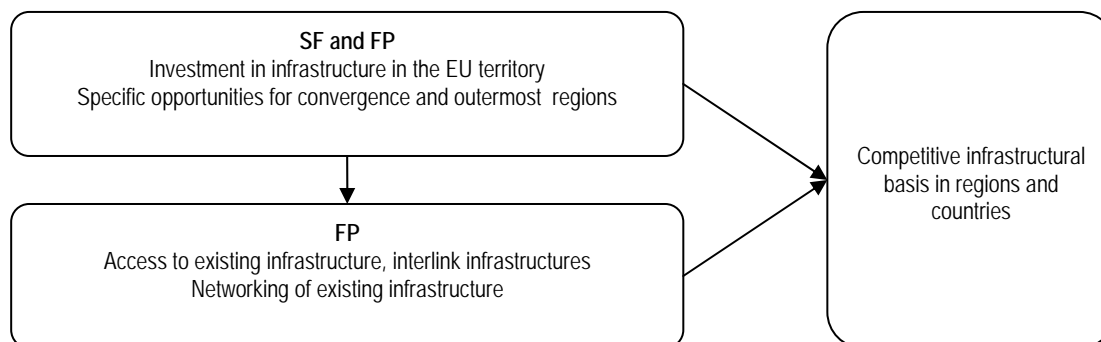
Besides human resources, research infrastructure is the second pillar on which an efficient RTDI system is built. Targeted support to research infrastructures contributes to strengthen the national and regional basis of research but it also provides the opportunity to create the roots of a network of European dimension. In this regard a number of options are currently offered from SF and FP:

- Investment in research and innovation infrastructures is an important component of many SF programmes. As far as research infrastructures are concerned, the SF objectives of economic and social cohesion, contribute mainly to investment in applied rather than basic research. But the funding period 2000 to 2006 also has examples of cases where SF were used to support investment in basic research units that could form a nucleus for research-based cluster development. Frequent use has been made of SF investment in infrastructure and equipment for applied research institutes – mainly when involved in cooperation projects with industrial partners.
- The FP contributes to infrastructure investment in the EU with two actions within the Capacities specific programme: the Research Infrastructure action for the whole EU territory and the Research Potential action which is addressed to convergence and the outermost regions.
- Another important goal is to make more efficient use of planned or existing infrastructures in the EU. The coordination effort made at European level (under the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructure – ESFRI) aims at creating a European research infrastructure backbone, but also gives orientation on the development trends at European level. Moreover, ESFRI is organising a forum for the exchange and coordination of RTDI infrastructure policies.
- The FP, in its Capacity strand, is also aiming at the availability and efficient development of distributed infrastructures (GRID network, data communication, etc.), and both SF and FP provide funds for ICT infrastructures linking research centres and creating the capacity for virtual research communities.
- The potential use of the infrastructure for excellent research projects, leading to internationally competitive innovations, should be taken into account when funding conditions are established. FP provides directions that could be considered at the regional level. This is the case, for example, with the concept of “Centre of Excellence”, that may be established or improved in the regions with SF. These funds can target existing R&D infrastructures or support the creation of new ones, promoting their European visibility in view of their participation in larger European scale operations.
- FP7 is also offering the opportunity of the “Risk-sharing finance facility” (RSFF). Financed by the FP and managed by the European Investment Bank (EIB), the RSFF provides loans to finance research projects either eligible for FP or with a specific “European dimension”.

EXPERIENCES

The Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (Brandenburg, D) (www.pik-potsdam.de) was founded in 1992 and now has a staff of about 150 people. Researchers from natural and social sciences work together to study global change and its impacts on ecological, economic and social systems. After a basic renovation of the main building (historic Astrophysical Observatory) and an underground extension constructed for the new high-performance computer financed by SF in 1998-2001 the institute is now highly competitive in the FP (more than 10 projects in FP6 as an coordinator) and other international cooperations. For instance, PIK is participating in ADAM, an integrated project funded by FP6 running from 2006 to 2009 that will lead to a better understanding of the trade-offs and conflicts that exist between adaptation and mitigation policies.

SCENARIO



4.3 Develop RTDI excellence

When a basic capacity for research and innovation has been developed, the next step is to **improve quality** and move towards excellence. Finally, research and innovation should be competitive in an international perspective. This is the aim of the European Research Area, but also part of national or regional RTDI strategies. Excellent research can produce knowledge with the potential to create growth and employment.

Recommendation 6

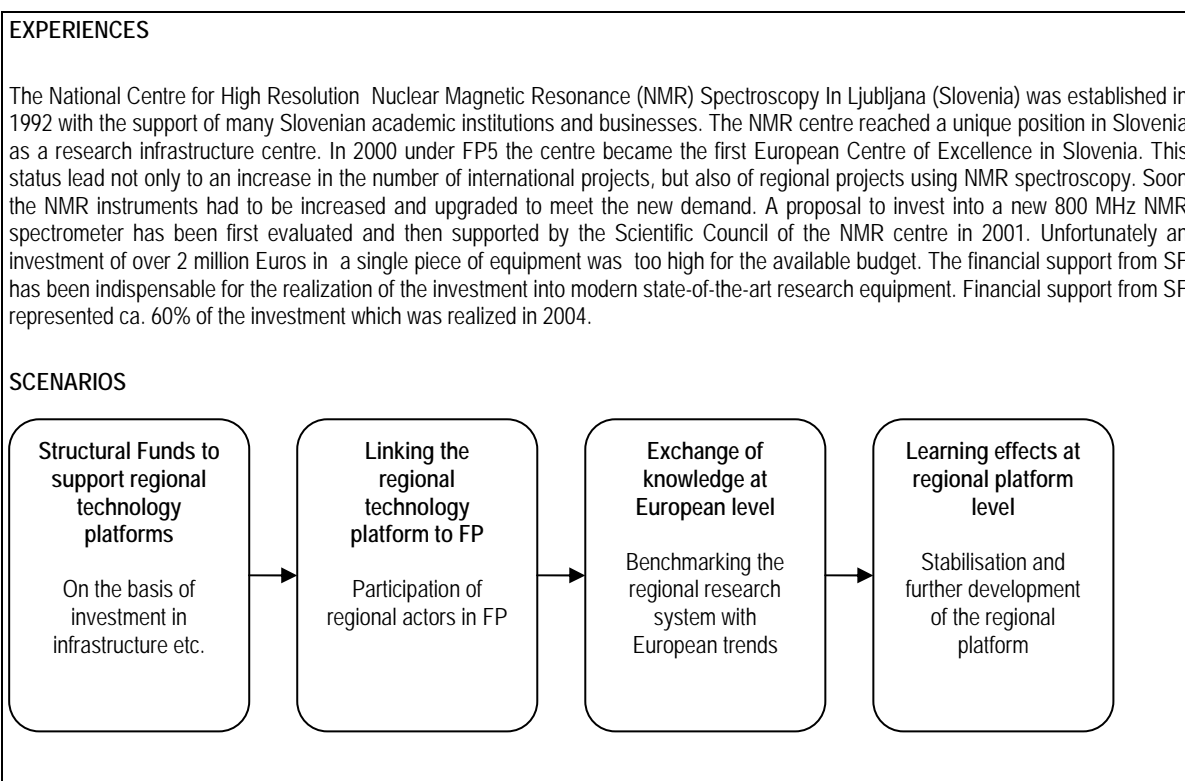
Exploit the impetus provided by FP to cultivate and boost R&D: use FP and SF to promote excellence.

FP is guided by the concept of excellence and can be looked on as a “detector” of development trends to be adapted to local contexts. FP provides ideas, examples and “models” of activities, schemes and structures that can be regarded as a reference for research based actions to be developed at the local level. FP actions should be analysed and monitored in order to design and implement development paths based on specific territorial conditions and supported by SF.

- Observe the activities of the European Research Council (ERC) that address the most innovative research trends across Europe and those of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in order to pick up research trends but also to identify opportunities for the local actors that could be developed with the support of SF.
- Refer to the European Technology Platforms (ETP) and use SF (together with other regional and national funds) to structure and strengthen national and regional technology platforms, with investment in

infrastructures but also in applied research and the exploitation of results. Provide support to connect such platforms at the European level and open up pathways to European excellent research, knowledge and innovation.

- Use SF for Centres of Excellence thus strengthening internationally competitive high-quality R&D activities and creating preconditions for integrating them into the European Research Area (ERA).
- Look at the contents and schemes of the different FP specific programmes, mainly Cooperation (for collaborative research projects), Capacities (with its different action lines) and People (for human capital mobility and upgrade) to get ideas and operational intervention models, and use SF to develop appropriate research related actions, adapted to local needs and conditions, in the regions.



Recommendation 7

Use FP and SF to improve networking between research institutes, universities, enterprises and other relevant actors and to foster the development of clusters and poles.

Carrying out excellent research is usually a collaborative exercise: researchers combine their intellectual and infrastructural resources to create new knowledge. The whole process of developing knowledge – from invention to application – profits from a stable chain of cooperating actors. In addition, new problems and research demands are often identified thanks to the collaboration between research actors and enterprises involved in R&D. Networking can thus also help to define a research demand based on business needs that

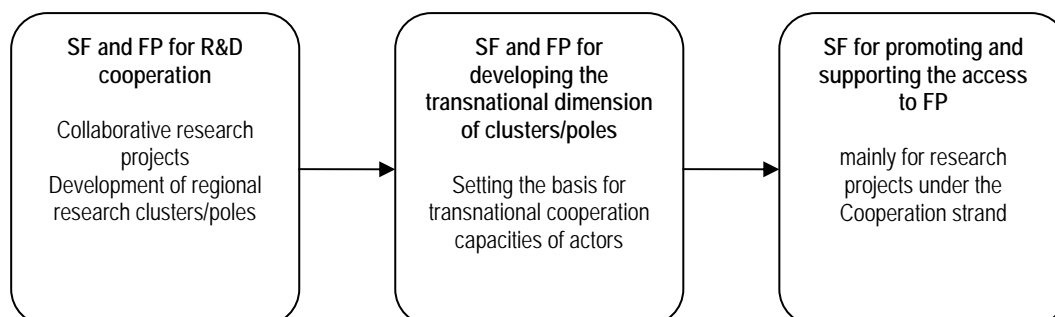
will lead to a more likely economic use of research results. In addition, clustering has developed into a central concept for regional growth, bringing into best possible use the regional potential and avoiding both inefficient rivalry and duplication of efforts. In this regard, clusters are best adapted to focus on the growth objective of regional policy, in addition to the cohesion objective.

- SF can be used to stimulate research demand and promote cooperation between knowledge supply (research institutes and universities) and demand (businesses). FP can support cooperation between different actors in several ways, typically by means of collaborative research projects and coordination and specific support actions (Cooperation strand) and with the specific action devoted to SMEs (within the Capacity strand).
- ERDF, within the Territorial Cooperation Objective, and FP with the Regions of Knowledge (RoK) action, can be used to promote and strengthen networking of research and business actors and the development of clusters and poles. In addition to grants, support can be provided in the form of services or advice. ESF enhances human capital by promoting networking activities between higher education institutions, research and technological centres and enterprises.
- SF offer the possibility to develop innovative approaches, e.g. through the SF mainstream OPS or with the Regions for Economic Change initiative, also in the field of regional networking and clustering.

EXPERIENCES

The Greek Regional Innovation Poles (RIPs) are an “umbrella” Programme offering a broad spectrum of implementation instruments in order to promote innovative activities undertaken by local stakeholders and to develop appropriate innovation policies at a regional level. These instruments include collaborative RTD projects between firms and research institutions, development and networking of technology transfer organisations and SMEs, innovative activities in SMEs, development of spin off companies, upgrading of RTD infrastructures in fields of regional interest, training and education activities, establishment of regional technology platforms, etc. All these activities are covered by SF. A Regional Innovation Pole (RIP) is described as a “partnership” between business firms, knowledge-generating agencies and other agencies, such as associations of enterprises, service providers, training agencies, technology transfer agencies, banks, etc., that operate in the same region, aiming at promoting R&D and innovation within the region. Research driven clusters are created linked to a centre or network of excellence. So far 5 RIPs have been established in Greece. Further open calls will be launched offering possibilities to create RIPs in other regions of the country, but also to extend existing ones. The Regions of Knowledge Programme of FP7 should cover the networking costs required for the RIPs to move from the regional to the European level.

SCENARIOS

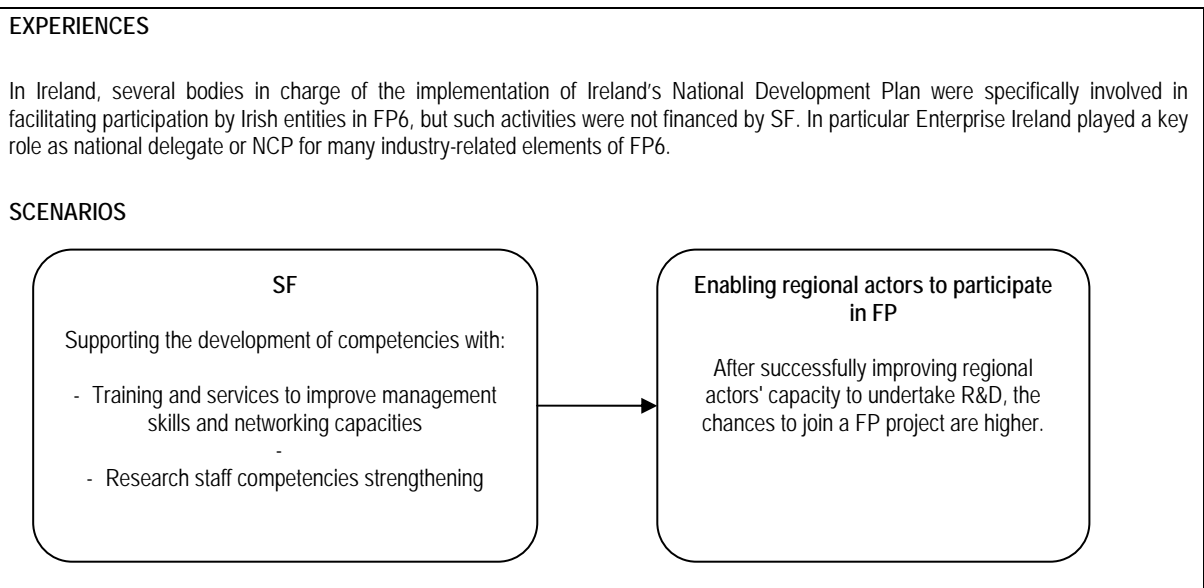


Recommendation 8

Use SF to promote the scientific, technological, entrepreneurial and managerial capacity of regional actors and thereby increase their capacity to participate in the FP.

The participation in FP projects represents a step towards high-level research and excellence, but requires scientific knowledge and skills as well as management and administrative competencies. This is often a barrier, especially for actors having limited resources (and practice) as for instance SMEs, which frequently suffer from a lack of management experience and competence in international R&D cooperation projects. SF can play a supporting role in this regard, promoting scientific, technological, managerial and entrepreneurial capacity and competence thereby increasing research actors' capabilities to participate in the FP. SF can therefore contribute to raising the research and innovation capacity in the region up to a level where research bodies and businesses can participate in transnational research projects

- SF offer a broad range of instruments to support potential applicants including: innovation assistants in SMEs, management training, support for knowledge and network management. Instruments of this type are targeting the lack of knowledge of local actors in network and research management.
- Supporting measures are an investment in knowledge, as during the project's preparatory phase a lot of intercultural learning and networking take place, thus building management knowledge to be used later on.



4.4 Develop R&D cooperation at European and international level

Linking the RTDI system of a territory to the most advanced research centres in a specific area allows the connection of the territory to the forefront of scientific and technological development. This creates a good starting condition for economic growth as knowledge is available earlier. Also the detection of new trends is easier if the RTDI system of a given region can profit from close links to international discourse.

Recommendation 9

Use the potential of FP and SF in terms of transnational and international networking and R&D cooperation to connect the regional or national research system to international networks and trends in Europe and beyond.

Transnational and international cooperation is one of the core ideas of FP. However, SF can also contribute to linking the regional or national system to international networks and trends:

- In the RTDI strategy of a territory, the FP can be used to improve the networking of the research and education actors including industry, both within Europe and beyond: collaborative projects, European Technology Platforms and Joint Technology Initiatives, are being driven by FP.
- SF can be applied to create and develop clusters, networks and projects not only at national, but also at transnational and international level, bringing together firms and research centres. Both ERDF (with the Territorial Cooperation objective) and ESF offer opportunities to support international networking of research actors and enterprises. ESF specifically supports transnational and interregional cooperation offering 10% higher funds than the standard maximum co-financing rate.

SF can fund transnational cooperation activities at European level which can be linked to FP. This represents one step in the direction of getting connected to the European strategic R&D agendas of existing schemes and networks, as well as new R&D structures to be created in the near future:

- European Technology Platforms (ETP) have been set up in a number of areas where Europe's competitiveness, economic growth and welfare depend on important research and technological progress in the medium to long term. They bring together stakeholders, under industrial leadership, to define and implement a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA). The implementation of the SRAs will be supported by the FP7 Cooperation programme in areas where they constitute true European added value. Some Member States have established corresponding national technology platforms. Complementary national and regional activities with SF are possible.
- A limited number of ETPs are further developed into strategic public-private-partnerships (exposing further funding sources). So-called Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI) are under preparation and will combine private sector investment, regional/national and European public funding, including grant funding from the FP and loans from the European Investment Bank. Complementary funding of nationally/regionally supported activities (the implementation of parts of the SRA) with SF is possible.
- FP ERA-NET projects support the coordination of national and regional research programmes. The ultimate goal for the ERA-NETs are joint, transnational activities financed by national/regional programmes. Complementary funding of these transnational activities with SF is possible. FP ERA-NET PLUS projects support the coordination of national and regional research programmes and may –depending on the specific calls– provide additional EU financial support (“top-up”) for joint, transnational activities. Managing thus a “common budget” which will be dedicated to transnational research activities excludes co-funding by SF.
- FP “Coordination of national research programmes” will also be used to enhance the complementarity and

synergy between FP and activities carried out under intergovernmental structures such as EUREKA – a network for more market oriented R&D - and the European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technological research (COST), a network for more basic oriented R&D. Both European initiatives coordinate nationally (less regionally) funded R&D projects.

EXPERIENCES

The Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology (CDTI) of Spain has been managing Structural Funds for technology innovation and development projects since 1994 and using them to support Spanish participants in EUREKA projects for firms in less favoured regions. A new initiative is planned to help foster Spanish leadership in international R&D projects within the ERA using SF (via the so-called Technology Fund assigned to Spain for the period 2007-2013). The objective of LIDERIA is to promote a strong involvement of Spanish Industry in large and strategic ERA projects. This action has three main lines to support: Spanish industrial partners in JTI (Art. 171 initiatives), in schemes such as ERANET-plus and community activities associated with Art. 169, as well as in strategic RDTI projects which have emerged from European Technological Platforms and Eureka.

4.5 Strengthen exploitation and economic and social valorisation of R&D results

Research - in the view of the Lisbon Strategy – is not the final objective, but a means, or as the Lisbon documents state, an "engine" to achieve growth and jobs. Therefore, the **transfer of knowledge** to innovative goods, processes or services is essential. The importance of improving knowledge transfer between public research institutions and third parties, including industry and civil society organisations, was identified as one of the key areas of action. Member States should make full use of the available funding sources, including SF and FP as stated by the recent Commission Communication on knowledge transfer.¹² Only if economically exploited, knowledge can contribute to growth and jobs. Therefore, the support to strengthen exploitation and economic utilisation is a key to the success of the Lisbon Strategy. Both FP and SF acknowledge this and take it into account in their funding rationale. FP focus is on research, encouraging the participation of SMEs (that account for 99% of all businesses in the EU), while SF is based on a broader approach, enabling the development of a set of tools to support knowledge transfer, both by establishing networks and support structures such as incubators, as well as by supporting training and exchange of staff and the creation of new innovative enterprises.

Recommendation 10

Use FP and SF for valorising research results, achieving an easy and open access to knowledge and transferring the knowledge produced under FP into economic or societal use.

FP activities lead to the production of knowledge and successfully finalised projects offer an obvious knowledge potential that can be exploited. As a next stage, the use of SF for financing the pre-competitive development phase of successful FP projects should be considered.

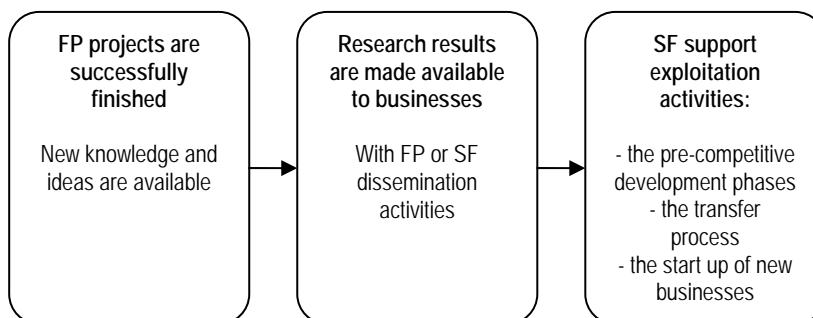
¹² Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Improving knowledge transfer between research institutions and industry across Europe: embracing open innovation – Implementing the Lisbon Agenda. Brussels, 4.4.2007 COM(2007) 182 final.

- FP foresees dissemination actions to allow access to research results carried out in the EU. In most cases, efficient network structures can help to ensure that potential beneficiaries can really profit from the knowledge creation: knowledge transfer from research to development often needs to be organised, and this can be efficiently done in dense and active networks, which can be supported by SF funds.
- In fact, SF offer a very broad set of instruments to support knowledge transfer and research exploitation by businesses and the market. The funding of networks for research and development, involving research and business actors as well as technology and knowledge transfer supporting organisations, plays an important role, as they help to connect research to business. Specific supporting services are also needed, typically related to IPR issues, that can be organised and delivered with SF funded actions.
- Funding schemes supporting the participation of research institutes located outside the territory can be part of SF operations, based on the idea to attract knowledge from outside to be exploited within the territory. In more general terms, the attraction of foreign direct investment and in particular of high-tech enterprises to the territory may bring not only economic value and employment opportunities but also knowledge with exploitation opportunities.
- Knowledge transfer to the business sector often takes place by setting up new research or knowledge based entrepreneurial activities. The SF can support the promotion of entrepreneurship by making services or funds available to new enterprises. Research spin-offs and innovative start-ups are key actions funded by SF.

EXPERIENCES

The exploitation of R&D results can be supported by SFs, as has happened in Greece and in Italy (e.g. in Emilia-Romagna with both ERDF and ESF funds) where activities such as the creation of spin-offs, the setting up and running of incubators, the provision of technical services by intermediaries and technology transfer agents have been funded by ERDF in particular. Similar measures can be found in almost all European regions.

SCENARIOS



Recommendation 11

Use FP and SF to strengthen the role of SMEs in research and development and their capacities to exploit knowledge.

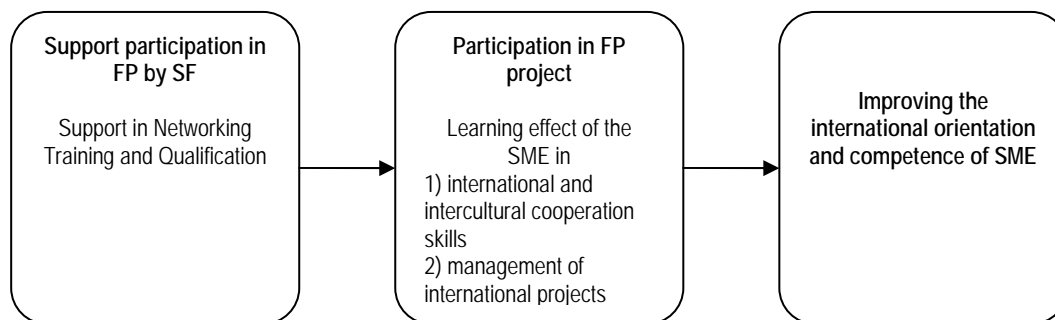
Traditionally research units of large enterprises and international companies are important R&D players turning medium to long term research results into economic value. To achieve the Lisbon target, SMEs need to become more involved in research and development and to improve their capacity to exploit short to medium term research results for the development of new competitive products, processes and services. SF and FP can be used to complement each other: SF can be used to strengthen the SMEs' capacity to carry out R&D and exploit research results, while FP can provide support to undertake R&D networking and co-operation at the European level. While SF and FP can thus intervene primarily in the early phases, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) should help SMEs in overcoming a possible gap at the innovation stage.

- FP devotes a share of 15% of the available funding to SMEs under the Cooperation strand, allows a higher funding for research and development activities of SMEs (75% instead of the 50% foreseen for big enterprises) and foresees research results' take-up actions. In addition, it uses the SMEs action of the Capacities strand to support small groups of SMEs in solving common problems and in developing solutions of broader interest.
- SF allows for the development of a range of tools to support SMEs' capacity to carry out research activities and exploit research results, including financing instruments for R&D carried out at the local level, training, consultancy, networking services, cluster development, as well as facilities and services for start-ups and spin-offs.
- As for economic exploitation of knowledge in particular, the search for new innovative financing instruments has gained weight in recent years. In addition to grants, revolving instruments can be used to set up a more sustainable basis for the financing of R&D, including the financing of SMEs involved in R&D. Innovative financing tools, from loans to guarantee funds, can be also used to finance the exploitation of property rights, and also for the setting up or development of new businesses. This trend is reinforced by SF financed initiatives, such as JEREMIE which offers specific opportunities to use revolving funds for investment in business start-ups and SMEs.

EXPERIENCES

Saxony-Anhalt (D) stimulates more innovation in the enterprises of the region in order to create higher investment in R&D. The ProDiMa project was part of the innovative actions of ERDF in 2004. The project created a Virtual Development and Training Centre (VDTC) that was able to bring together high-tech and top research with small mechanical and plant engineering enterprises. Together the science and business community were able to develop technologies for training on complex machinery, visual-interactive product presentation and virtual product development. This pilot project laid the basis for a bigger ERDF investment in a special building for VDTC which was opened in 2006. Some SMEs and research institutions involved in the ProDiMa project became partners in a Network of Excellence (financed by FP6) focused on virtual reality and virtual environments' applications for future workspaces.

SCENARIOS



Recommendation 12

Use FP and SF to get researchers more involved in development activities and business creation: promoting transfer of personnel from academia to companies and vice versa, IPR exploitation and the setting up of new research and knowledge based enterprises.

The transfer of knowledge can be achieved by transferring people - and competencies - from research to the economy and vice versa. Researchers, who having worked in enterprises, then return to university or research institutes are in general more open to undertake cooperation projects with enterprises. In addition, while spending a period within a company, they have the opportunity to learn from the daily problems of businesses and get valuable skills for designing and carrying out R&D activity of business interest. When managed in a professional and balanced way, knowledge transfer can be beneficial both for the research institutions concerned and society in general.¹³

- Transfer of personnel between research and business should be promoted and supported using SF mainly for regional and national mobility, while FP can offer business-academia pathways opportunities at the EU level, mainly from within the People strand, in the form of joint partnership, staff secondment and events.
- SF, in particular ESF, can be used to build the knowledge and management skills of people employed by companies for R&D or to transfer related functions. SMEs in particular need these kind of profiles and the development of new competencies in these fields can be achieved using SF.

¹³ Commission Staff Working Document: Voluntary Guidelines for universities and other research institutions to improve their links with industry across Europe. Brussels 4.4.2007 SEC(2007)449.

- SF can also be used to support and finance spin-offs initiated by researchers, thus promoting the exploitation of knowledge created in universities or research institutions. Often research spin-offs face specific problems, typically the lack of management skills. SF can help by providing guidance, training and consultancy services.
- All issues related to IPR protection and exploitation, which represent a central topic of research exploitation can be targeted by SF actions in terms of information diffusion, training and consultancy.

EXPERIENCES

In Germany, the support for innovation assistants in SMEs is an important SF measure in Objective-1-regions. SMEs receive support to employ a young scientist (grant partly covering personnel costs for 2 years), mainly directly after graduation. Additionally, qualification (innovation and project management and other management skills) and networking between these innovation assistants is supported. On the one hand it helps to find a first working place and to avoid unemployment. The person stays in the region close to the university and does not migrate to richer regions where wages are higher and work can be found. On the other hand the enterprise gets in touch with fresh knowledge from university. At the same time the measure develops management capacities (qualitatively and quantitatively) in the SME, also for possible participation in FP. Most innovation assistants also remain employed after the public support is finished.

4.6 Improve communication and information

The survey carried out among the CREST Working Group Members shows clearly that there is a severe lack of **communication** between the implementing structures of FP on one hand and SF on the other. The lack of communication is a problem even where the same authority (a national or regional ministry) is responsible for the implementation of both FP actions and research actions of an SF programme. Availability of **information** is fundamental for a better understanding of the opportunities offered by each funding scheme, both for strategic planning by decision makers and for final beneficiaries, who could better refer to the different options. Communication and collaboration is necessary for defining the strategic directions of the activities carried out in the territories and is essential for a better and coordinated use of FP and SF.

Recommendation 13

Make sure that actors involved in delivering FP and SF know about the opportunities offered by the other instrument. Support communication and create interfaces between the two communities.

Nearly all Member States represented in the CREST WG reported a deficit in communication between SF and FP actors. There is insufficient knowledge on the funding conditions and concrete opportunities of the other programme. The use which is being made of the other funding instrument in the country or in the region is not taken into consideration. An essential step in improving coordination is to create conditions and define tools for facilitating exchange of information.

- At a very basic level, policy makers, officials and members of implementing agencies should know more about each other. It is important that exchange of information is not limited to a general level, but takes into account specific provisions at the given national or regional level. Answers to questions such as "Does

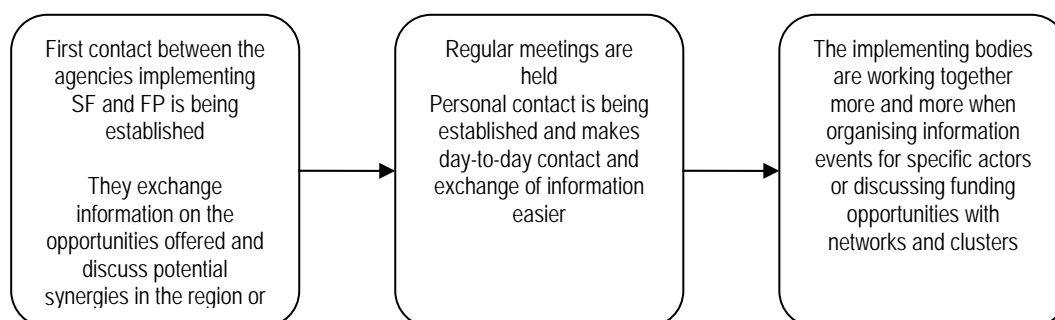
ERDF offer funds for R&D infrastructure?”, “What instruments are offered for R&D projects?”, “Is ESF supporting training of research staff?” and others that may be raised by potential beneficiaries should be easily available. On the other hand, the broad range of activities possible under FP should be known as well. This includes at least general knowledge of the fields and methods of work of the FP, including open and future calls. It is also important to know what projects are financed by FP in the region and which partners (research institutes, enterprises, etc.) are involved.

- Open common databases of projects financed by SF and FP can help to illustrate the potential of the two programmes. The promotion of regional or national research competencies and potential can be a side-effect when making this information available. Besides a projects database, the information on both FP and SF funding opportunities could also be presented at one single platform.
- Exchange of information between the implementation structures of FP and SF is to be organised in accordance with the regional and national systems. These systems allow for linking elements in the implementation structure, but the involvement of one actor in both systems does not guarantee successful exchange of information. Regular and updated information flows need to be organised regardless of the national and regional implementation structure. A contact database would help to identify the relevant actors. Joint FP and SF events such as information days, round tables etc. can help to share information between the two communities. Invitations to information events should include the other community. One could also consider the participation of NCP representatives at SF Monitoring Committees’ meetings.
- Training courses for the employees in the SF and FP implementation structures would improve cooperation and communication. The Commission might support this effort when selecting and training the NCPs for the FP.

EXPERIENCES

In some countries such as Estonia and Greece the public responsibility for SF and FP is combined in one authority. Other countries – e.g. Sweden – have joint structures dealing with both programmes (e.g. contact points) in place on a more downstream level. If one cannot provide such an institutional link, at least an exchange of information is required. For instance in Lithuania, consultations and efforts at co-operation took place between the Central Project Management Agency CMPA, responsible for the implementation of ERDF schemes, and the Agency for International Science and Technology Development Programmes acting as Lithuanian National Contact Point (NCP) for FP7. A third model is represented by Finland, where integrated regional branches of national ministries are coordinating different policies including SF and FP related issues for their territory.

SCENARIOS



Recommendation 14

Make sure that information on FP and SF is available and easily accessible for the potential applicants of both instruments. Be aware of different needs depending on the type of the possible beneficiaries i.e. research institutes, SME, large enterprises, etc.

FP and SF address overlapping target groups when it comes to R&D funding. Universities and higher education institutions, private enterprises and research organisations are the most numerous groups of actors for both funding instruments. At the same time, these actors are important when it comes to coordination: they are the ones who can select different funding sources depending on the type of project and at what stage they are in the R&D process. Easy access to information on FP and SF opportunities is therefore essential.

- A regional one-stop-shop solution could appear to be the best solution, however an easy access to information could also be organised in a different way, also taking into consideration the geographical aspect. In fact in some cases the national level could be the right scale for providing general information in the most efficient way, while detailed information to potential beneficiaries of a given territory, including the offer of both SF and FP may be more effectively provided at the regional or even local level. In any case, the most important point is that information providers, no matter how they are organised, should meet the potential applicants' needs and be able to provide information not only on FP or SF, but offer access to both and also ideally to other regional and national funding sources. An option offered by e-technologies is to develop web-based information tools providing details on the funding opportunities offered by both SF and FP.

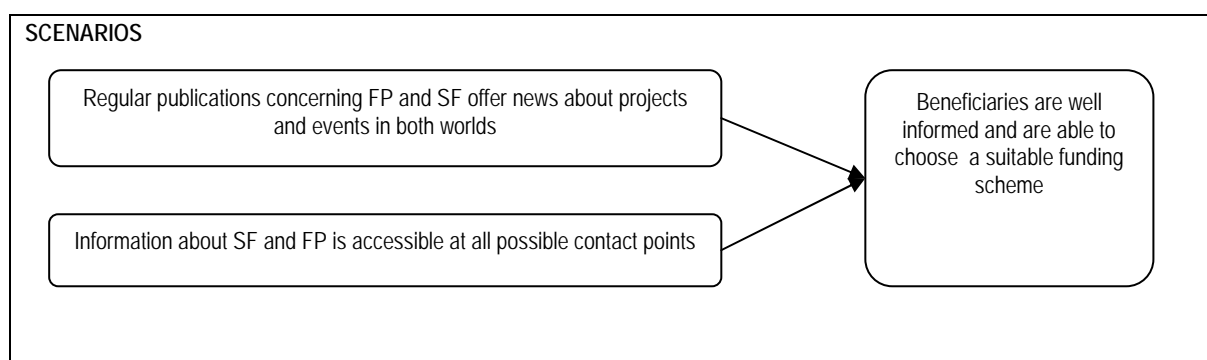
EXPERIENCES

Example 1:

ASTER Science Technology Business, acts as Emilia-Romagna's single access point to information on funding opportunities related to regional, national and European funding schemes related to RTDI, thus including both SF and FP related information. A specific online information service has been set up, called F1RST (<http://first.aster.it/>), which is easily accessible by any interested organisation looking for funding opportunities for RTDI projects. In addition, ASTER provides guidance and support on project planning and implementation, including referring potential beneficiaries to the competent authorities managing the specific fund or acting as interface between the beneficiaries and the funding scheme managers.

Example 2:

Germany has established a virtual one-stop-shop for potential applicants on the internet (www.foerderdatenbank.de). It is a database with all support programmes at European, federal and regional level as well as European programmes. The database can be searched for different keywords and types of projects and applicants. It is a good starting point for information about specific programmes. But further advice for applicants face-to face about the application process etc. is always needed. The database points the way to programme managers and their contact details. But specific information about which programmes are co-financed by SF could be improved.



5. Outlook and follow-up

The proposed recommendations underline that a better coordination between SF and FP is not simply a technical or routine task. To improve synergies between the two instruments an ongoing process of trying, learning, and exchange is required. The CREST Working Group suggests to take the following steps to bring the effort of better coordination of FP and SF to effective and sustainable results.

- A first step is to promote the **diffusion of the recommendations** in the Member States and to encourage the same exercise at the regional and national level in order to define opportunities coming from the coordination of different instruments including also other national and regional schemes and funds.
- The diffusion and application of the recommendations should be supported by more **systematic activities to collect experiences and evidences** of the opportunities and effects of coordinated use of FP and SF. The Working Group faced difficulties in accessing systematically information on experiences involving the coordination of the two instruments. A better basis of evidence would be very useful. The evaluation and monitoring systems of the two instruments can partly contribute to the creation of such a basis. In addition more structured research on the coordination between FP and SF – possibly taking systematically into account the relationship with the given national structures and instruments – could also help to find more solid grounds for further work. In this context, the OMC net call for proposals, aimed at complementing the work of CREST, could be used a very valuable tool to foster mutual learning in this area. The European Commission could provide support by setting up a communication and learning structure at the EU level for the provision of information to those who are seeking to undertake actions in this area.
- Although working to a very tight schedule allows only limited room for exchange and discussion, the Working Group Members received and appreciated the fruitful cooperation of the present Working Group. The implementation and follow-up process could be accompanied by a future **CREST Working Group** with the mandate to:
 - Improve the work with more operational recommendations addressed to the different target groups on the basis of additional evidence collected;
 - Enlarge the scope of the work to take other EU instruments properly into account. The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the EU Educational Programme are closely linked to both FP and SF. To develop a coherent policy approach other relevant programmes should also be

taken into account. In addition, cooperation/coordination with other European advisory groups, committees and fora which also aim for the coordinated use of different Community programmes should be envisaged (e.g. the Innovation Policy Advisory Board for CIP) and strengthened (as EURAB).

Annexes

Annex I: Structural Funds and Framework Programme – Basic Information

	Structural Funds (SF)	Framework Programme (FP)
Legal Framework	<p>Structural Funds Regulations</p> <p>General regulation: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/general/ce_1083(2006)_en.pdf</p> <p>European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Regulation: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/feder/ce_1080(2006)_en.pdf</p> <p>European Social Fund (ESF) Regulation: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/fse/ce_1081(2006)_en.pdf</p> <p>Community Strategic Guidelines on cohesion http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/osc/index_en.htm</p> <p>Additional documents (e.g. the implementation regulation): http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/newregl0713_en.htm</p>	<p>Council decision on the 7th Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:400:0060:0085:EN:PDF</p> <p>More information to be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/documents.html http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/documents.html</p>
Modus of implementation	<p>When the decision on the regulation is taken at European level, the main responsibility for implementation lies with the Member State and the regional authorities:</p> <p>Regulation ↓ National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) ↓ Commission decision on the NSRF ↓ Regional or national Operational Programmes (OPs) ↓ Commission decision adopting OPs ↓ Regional and national implementation regulations and measures</p>	<p>Based on the Council decision, Calls are published and projects selected at European level:</p> <p>Council Decision ↓ Calls at European level for single programmes http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/documents.html http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm</p>
Content	<p>Content of SF interventions is defined at national or regional level within the broad framework set by the regulations. More than 80% of SF Funds are to be spent in Convergence regions.</p> <p>The SF (ESF, ERDF) can intervene in three objectives of regional policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Convergence objective 2) Regional competitiveness and Employment Objective 3) European Territorial cooperation <p>ERDF</p> <p>1) Convergence objective</p> <p>In regions covered by the Convergence objective, ERDF focuses its intervention on modernising and diversifying economic structures as well as safeguarding or creating sustainable jobs, with action in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ research and technological development (RTD), innovation and entrepreneurship; ○ information society; 	<p>Defined on European level.</p> <p>Specific calls to be published under the framework of different programmes within FP7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cooperation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborative research (collaborative projects, networks of excellence, coordination/support actions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health ▪ Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology ▪ Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) ▪ Nanosciences, Nanotechnology, Materials and new Production Technologies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o local development; o environment; o risk prevention; o tourism; o culture and cultural heritage; o transport investments; o energy investments; o education investments; o health and social infrastructure. <p>2) Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective For the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective, the ERDF priorities are based on three sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o innovation and knowledge-based economy: strengthening regional capacities for research and technological development, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship and creating financial engineering instruments notably for knowledge-intensive SMEs; o environment and risk prevention: cleaning up polluted areas, boosting energy efficiency, promoting clean public transport within towns and drawing up plans to prevent and cope with natural and technological risks; o access to transport and telecommunications services of general economic interest. <p>3) European Territorial Cooperation objective For the European Territorial Cooperation objective, the ERDF focuses its aid on three main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o development of economic, social and environmental cross-border activities; o establishment and development of transnational cooperation, including bilateral cooperation between maritime regions; o increasing the effectiveness of regional policy through interregional cooperation, the networking and exchange of experiences between regional and local authorities. <p>ESF Within the framework of the Convergence and Regional competitiveness and employment objectives the ESF supports actions in Member States in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o increasing adaptability of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs: lifelong learning and increased investment in human resources, development of qualifications and competences, the dissemination of information and communication technologies, e-learning, eco-friendly technologies and management skills, the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation and business start-ups; identification of future occupational and skills requirements, the development of, training and support services, including outplacement, for workers in the context of company and sector restructuring; o enhancing access to employment for job seekers, unemployed, young people, women and migrants; o reinforcing social inclusion of disadvantaged people and combating discrimination in the labour market; o enhancing human capital: reforms in education and training systems, raising people' responsiveness to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Energy, ▪ Environment (including climate change) ▪ Transport (including Aeronautics) ▪ Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities ▪ Security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Technology Platforms o Joint Technology Initiatives, Article 171: Joint Undertakings or any other structure; firmly anchored in themes of the Cooperation Programme; o Coordination of non-Community research programmes: ERA-NET, ERA-NET Plus (financial support to "top-up" joint calls); COST; EUREKA; Article 169: Participation in research and development programmes undertaken by Member States; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o European Research Council: first major funding programmes: independent researcher grant; advanced investigator grant; o Frontier Research Actions • People – Human Potential, Marie Curie actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Initial training of researchers – Marie Curie Networks o Life-long training and career development – Individual fellowships o Industry-academia pathways and partnerships o International dimension – outgoing and incoming fellowships, international cooperation scheme, reintegration grants o Excellence awards • Capacities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Research infrastructures: optimising the use and development of the best existing research infrastructures in Europe; helping to create in all fields of S&T new research of pan-European interest needed by the European scientific community; supporting programme implementation and policy development (e.g. international cooperation) o Risk-Sharing-Finance Facility: a Commission-European Investment Bank joint initiative to
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	<p>needs of a knowledge –based society and lifelong learning, the continual updating of the skills of training personnel with a view to innovation and a knowledge-based economy; development of human potential in research and innovation, notably through post-graduate studies and training of researchers (Convergence objective); networking activities between higher education institutions, research and technological centres and enterprises;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ promoting partnerships, pacts and initiatives through networks of relevant stakeholders for reforms in the field of employment and labour market inclusiveness; ○ supporting transnational and interregional actions in particular through sharing information, experiences, results and good practices, and through developing complementary approaches and coordinated or joint action. <p>Within the Convergence objective regions ESF supports also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ expanding and improving human capital by reforming education systems, increasing participation in education and training, development of human potential in research and innovation ○ strengthening institutional capacity in the delivery of policies with a view to good governance in the relevant fields. <p>In addition, ESF supports transnational and interregional actions in particular through the sharing of information and experience and through development of complementary approaches and coordinated joint actions.</p>	<p>foster increased investment in research;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research for the benefit of SMEs, target groups: low and medium technology as well as research intensive SME and SME associations; ○ Regions of knowledge for all European regions, to encourage and support the development of regional research-driven clusters ○ Research potential for Convergence and Outermost Regions, to unlock and develop their research potential, to help researchers to successfully participate in research activities at EU level; ○ Science in society: a more dynamic governance of the science and society relationship; strengthening potential, broadening horizons; science and society communicate; ○ Support for the coherent development of research policies ○ Specific activities of international cooperation ○ Support for networking of National Contact Points for all topics of the Capacity strand; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nuclear research and training: Fusion energy – ITER; Nuclear fission and radiation protection ● Joint Research Centre: Direct actions in EURATOM; Non-nuclear actions
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Annex II: Complementary financing by the Structural Funds and the Framework Programme

The Community financial instruments are the funds, the programmes and other actions for specific assistance created by Community legislation and funded by the budget of the European Communities, such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund, the Research Framework Programme (FP).

An operation is defined as "a project or group of projects selected by the managing authority of the operational programme concerned or under its responsibility according to criteria laid down by the monitoring committee and implemented by one or more beneficiaries allowing achievement of the goals of the priority axis to which it relates" (Art. 2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006).

A clear distinction between complementary funding, co-financing and double financing must be made.

Double financing by different sources (either EU, national or regional) of the same expenses is prohibited: it is an abuse of public money.

Co-financing means that different sources contribute to the financing of an operation and is one of the principles of Structural Funds' financial management. Structural Funds (SF) are always co-financed by national and regional public and private funds. Another Community financial instrument like FP cannot substitute the national public counterpart. Actually, expenditure co-financed with the assistance of the SF but supported by another Community financial instrument (like FP) would be illegal. It is the responsibility of Member States and regional authorities to prevent such irregularities and, if needs be, to proceed with the financial corrections.

The relevant basic provision of the SF Regulations for 2007-2013 is Article 54(5) of Council Regulation 1083/2006. Article 54(5) provides that "an expenditure co-financed by the Funds shall not receive assistance from another Community financial instrument". This provision refers to expenditure, not projects, providing a very precise basis.

Therefore **complementary financing** of FP and SF means using financial contributions from the two different sources in a complementary way, but never co-financing the same set of expenses. It is not prohibited to finance the same operation complementarily, provided that the part of the operation funded by each instrument has an overall clearly separate and distinguishable "eligible amount".

This could be achieved, for example, by having different projects or parts of projects in the same operation, where one or parts of one project would be funded by the SF (within an Operational Programme) and the other(s) would be funded by other Community instruments (outside the scope of an Operational Programme). Complementary use of FP and SF may also refer to different time scales of project support, i.e. at first FP support, then SF support, or the other way round. FP and SF may also support different phases of the development of a technology, starting from basic research, to applied research, to demonstration or to pre-competitive market introduction.

Any activity must fall under the scope of the respective FP or SF regulation and programme. As for SF this

means that the respective activity to be supported is eligible provided that it is foreseen by the relevant Operational Programme. Art. 56 (4) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 stipulates "The rules on the eligibility of expenditure shall be laid down at national level subject to the exception provided for in the specific Regulations for each Fund." This means that complementary financing of FP and SF is at the will and is the responsibility of national and regional authorities.

Annex III: Acronyms

CIP	Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme
CREST	Comité de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
ERC	European Research Council
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
EU	European Union
EURAB	European Research Advisory Board
FP/FP7	7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INTERREG III	Community Initiative on cross-border, transnational and interregional co-operation (2000-2006)
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
JEREMIE	Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises
NCP	National Contact Point (of FP)
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
OP	Operational Programme
REC	Regions for Economic Change
R&D	Research and Development
RoK	Regions of Knowledge
RSFF	Risk-sharing Finance Facility
RTD	Research and Technological Development
RTDI	Research, Technological Development and Innovation
SF	Structural Funds
SME	Small and Medium Size Enterprise

Annex IV: List of Working Group Members

Country	Name	Organisation
Chairman		
Germany	Thilo STREIT	Ministry for Education, Science and Culture of the Land Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Head of the "Technology Transfer" unit
Rapporteur		
Germany	Eberhard SEITZ	formerly Projektträger Jülich, Forschungszentrum Jülich
Germany	Oliver SCHWAB,	IfS Institut für Stadtforschung und Strukturpolitik GmbH
External Experts		
Italy	Valeria BANDINI	ASTER Science Technology Business
Germany	Kathleen TOEPEL	Bureau for Evaluation and Innovation
Member States Representatives		
Austria	Gerhard SAILLER	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Belgium	Bernard DE POTTER	Agentschap Economie
Belgium	Marlies PEETERS	Agency for Economy of the Flemish Government
Belgium	Pierre VILLERS	Direction générale des technologies et de la recherche
Bulgaria	Albena VUTSOVA	Ministry of Education and Science
Estonia	Ene KADASTIK	Research Policy Department Ministry of Education and Research
Finland	Pirjo KUTINLAHTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry, Technology Department
France	Marie-Dominique TROYON	Ministère de la recherche
France	Gaetan MAIRESSE	Bureau des affaires européennes, Direction de la Stratégie, Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, Ministère délégué à la Recherche.
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France	Micheline LIAGRE	Ministère de la recherche
Germany	Nina SARTORI	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, Ref. 213: Forschungspolitik der EU
Germany	Klaus UCKEL	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, Ref. 213: Forschungspolitik der EU
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Greece	Leda GIANNAKOPOULOU	Ministry of Development, General Secretariat for Research & Technology
Hungary	Ilona VASS	National Office for Research and Technology
Italy	Teresa PANARIELLO	Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, Dipartimento per le Politiche di Sviluppo e Coesione Servizio per le Politiche dei Fondi Strutturali Comunitari
Norway	Kari-Mette LULLAU	Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development
Portugal	José BONFIM	Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education
Romania	Rolanda PREDESCU	R&D Policies and Strategies Ministry of Education and Research -National Authority for Scientific Research
Romania	Irina ROMAN	Intermediate Body for the Management of Structural Funds (for R&D and innovation), National Authority for Scientific Research
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Spain	Javier GARCIA	Center for Development of Industrial Technologies International Directorate
Sweden	Larsson LARS-GUNNAR	Vinnova - Swedish Agency for Innovation System)
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The Netherlands	M.W.V. (Marnix) MULLER	Ministry of Economic Affairs
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