

Simplifying the implementation of the Research Framework Programs
Maria da Graça Carvalho - ITRE Committee - 13 July 2010

President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning,

To begin with, I would like to underline the extensive consultation that this report has involved. I have launched a public consultation process and I have received wide ranging responses for which I am very grateful.

The report is of real interest to the scientific and business community. Moreover, it is particularly timely in light of the interim evaluation of FP7 and the start of the preparatory phase for FP8.

There are **four main aspects** of the report that I should like to bring out:

- Firstly, the question of administrative and financial simplification;
- Secondly, the need for improvement in quality, accessibility and transparency;
- Thirdly, I should like to suggest some of the benefits of enhanced synergy between programmes and instruments;
- And finally, I would like to say a few words about the future FP8.

1) So, firstly **the pragmatic shift towards administrative and financial simplification.**

There are 2 aspects:

- a) general principles
- b) concrete recommendations

a) In so far as the **general principles** are concerned:

- simplification is in the interest of the stakeholders
- it is necessary to provide stability and legal certainty
- there is also a need for trust-based and risk-tolerant approaches without sacrificing procedural rigour.

For example, this last point involves allowing beneficiaries to apply their usual management and accounting principles.

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b) As for the **concrete recommendations**, the main goal is to attain greater clarity, precision and simplicity. This involves:

- Firstly, clear definition of what needs to be changed, how it needs to be changed and at what speed.
- Secondly, further simplification in the rules governing funding and costing methodologies is necessary. For example, funding rates and costs calculation methods should be identical across the different instruments.
- Finally, clarity in the definition of such things as eligible costs and taxes is of the utmost importance. It is just as important to promote consistency in the application of rules across all commission departments and audits.

2) Turning now to **improvement in quality, accessibility and transparency**. There are three points:

a) I am in favour of a science-based approach. Such an approach promotes excellence whilst simplifying financial controls.

This being said, the "result-based approach" has certain advantages. However, before pursuing a "result-based approach", pilot tests should be carried out for research and demonstration projects in specifically challenging areas.

The second exception to my general preference to science based system is the "high trust awards" proposed by the commission. These are appropriate to frontier research, such as the ERC.

b) Minimizing delay is of course to be encouraged. However, it is important that Member States retain their power of scrutiny. In addition, I support the two-stage application procedure provided that evaluation is undertaken thoroughly in the initial stage.

c) I recommend the full integration of grants, evaluations and proposals into a unique IT platform. This should be sound, flexible and easy to use. The same platform should be used across all commission services and agencies.

3) With regard to **improved synergy of programmes and instruments**, we need to reduce the complexity of such programmes and instruments. This entails introducing uniform interpretation and application of rules and procedures. It also

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supposes harmonization across of all EU bodies involved. This will contribute to greatly enhanced synergy.

4) Finally, concerning **the future of the FP8 programme**, there are 3 basic aspects:

- a) I consider administrative simplification to be a central priority in the future FP8. The number of instruments should be reduced and greater coordination between them should be achieved.
- b) The FP should take into consideration the whole chain of innovation from frontier research, technological development, demonstration, valorisation of results and the rapid integration of research results into markets. This should strike a balance between top-down impact-driven and bottom-up, science driven research.
- c) I also believe that further internationalization is desirable and this should include developing countries.