

FRAUNHOFER-GESELLSCHAFT ZUR FÖRDERUNG DER ANGEWANDTEN FORSCHUNG E.V.

FUNDING CONDITIONS OF THE FUTURE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME FAIR AND SIMPLE

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Provide fair and simple funding conditions

Oversubscription is one of the main problems of Horizon 2020. It leads to frustration and causes unnecessary costs for proposal writing and evaluation. It can even be career threatening for researchers trying to apply for European grants with such low success rates. This development discourages participants and undermines the attractiveness of the programme. Fraunhofer strongly encourages the European Commission to tackle this problem not only through changes in the evaluation procedures, but also by designing the future framework programme in a way that helps to keep success rates at a reasonable level.

Grants for collaborative projects are by far the most relevant form of European funding for the majority of the participants. Collaborative projects best stimulate cooperation among the European member states and different participants groups (e.g. industry – academia). More effectively than other forms of funding, collaborative projects are accessible for participants from all countries. Hence, this format can contribute to closing the innovation divide. Fraunhofer recommends that funding through loans and other financial instruments should only complement collaborative projects rather than becoming main forms of funding.

The framework programmes for research have become increasingly complex and today Horizon 2020 is still not easily accessible - especially for new applicants. The sheer number of different instruments, initiatives and sub-programmes with different rules and objectives hinders accessibility and causes high administrative burdens. Fraunhofer recommends to further reduce deviations from the general rules for participation to a minimum as well as limiting the number of funding instruments and sub-programmes. Ultimately, the funding instruments and the different programmes should be decoupled.

After Horizon 2020 turned away from funding based on modern full cost accounting, Fraunhofer recommends that the future framework programme's funding modalities evolve in a way that eligible costs get as close as possible to the costs under full cost accounting. For organizations using methodologies for accounting for causally related costs, it is a prerequisite that those methodologies are their usual accounting practice, reflect national rules and regulations, and provide a proper audit trail. Fraunhofer also encourages the European Commission to further refine the concept of Large Research Infrastructures (LRI), thus lowering the administrative burden.