

General input on “Horizon Europe”

By the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), Vienna

We would like to emphasize that the “[objectives](#)” paper in many ways is a good continuation of previous editions of the “Framework Programme” (FP), up until FP8 (“Horizon 2020”). However, there are two issues that we see have gone somehow missing and that we, as an institute dedicated to provide social scientific knowledge to the public, see as particularly important.

Further integration of SSH

(1) Social sciences will play a crucial role in “cluster 2”, and it is also mentioned in the “objectives” paper (p.20), it will be (under the abbreviation “SSH”) one of the “cross-cutting research and innovation policy priorities”. The “objectives” paper, however, seems to reflect a limited understanding of the potential that SSH entails: SSH is not only about “human behavior” but also about institutions, traditions, cultures, and the like. It is not possible to advance science, research and innovation in any area without taking SSH findings into consideration. SSH are not simply about “how best to engage citizens”, as if there were to be a technological fix that society has to get used to. Instead, SSH provides crucial knowledge to transpose societal challenges into the kind of research questions that take into account the needs and requirements of citizens in the first place (for a background, see DOI: [10.22163/fteval.2019.362](https://doi.org/10.22163/fteval.2019.362)). SSH research also contextualizes STEM research as well as may look at the confluence of technology and society as well as the impacts of STEM research on human life and the environment.

It is therefore crucial to make sure that the ambitious goal set out under “Horizon 2020”, namely to “integrate” SSH into all clusters in Pillar 2, will continue. This starts with nominating a fair share of experts from the SSH into advisory committees, as well as formulating funding calls that are specifically putting SSH research front and center. SSH researchers must be part of every research journey, from defining missions, setting agendas, formulating questions and means and methods to answer them. Such calls have been developed already within some thematic areas but are far from being established. For example, under the keyword “SSH energy” explores how SSH research provides new avenues and angles to issues such as regulating energy consumption and providing social justice in fossil-fuel intensive regions. All clusters should take up these ideas and thereby systematically exploit the knowledge provided by SSH research.

Democratizing science, research and innovation

(2) Another cross-cutting initiative of the previous editions of the FP seems to be omitted in the “objectives” paper. While the “objectives” paper mentions “open science” and “ethics and research integrity”, those topics are narrowly related to (respectively) the issue of “open data” and “open access”, and “the highest ethics standards”. What is missing here is the more ambitious issue of further democratizing science, research and innovation through specific actions (currently “science with and for society”). In our opinion, cluster 2 should specifically include the impact of integrating European citizens into the production of scientific knowledge, technology, and innovation.

More generally, the lack of a consistent and actionable integration of such elements as “ethics”, “open access”, “open innovation”, and “public engagement” in the “objectives” paper is worrying, considering that these are time and again normatively claimed to be relevant for R&I by political decision makers, as evidenced in EC documents. If researchers are not challenged to acknowledge the relevance of RRI during the design and drafting of their research proposals and integrate societal needs, expectations, and values into their research when they seek funding, those claims will remain ineffective. From research such as some coordinated by our institute ([NewHoRRizon, Horizon 2020 grant agreement No 741402](#)) we know that introducing participatory elements actually works. Therefore we propose, as elements of better policy integration, that (a) research proposals are required to incorporate RRI-specific actions in the submissions’ tasks, deliverables, milestones, and budgets; (b) research evaluation processes have RRI experts in the evaluation panel(s); and (c) specific policy advocacy and expertise centres responsible for mainstreaming Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) are to be established through national contact points (NCPs) in each member state.

(Please note: the text above has been submitted to the European Commission on Friday, 6 September 2019 as part of IHS’ comment to the “Horizon Europe” [consultation](#) questionnaire. Specifically, it has been filed under Section D: *“Please provide here further general input regarding the targeted impacts from Horizon Europe.”* Subtitles have been added for improving readability.)