

## Science Europe and NWO launch initiative to align research data management policy across Europe

Science Europe and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) have launched an initiative for the voluntary international alignment of research data management policies. The organisations presented the initiative on 30 January in Brussels at a co-hosted event on how to manage research data in an era of Open Science.



Participants at the 30 January Workshop

The Open Science strategy is high on the political and scientific agenda in Europe, and access to and sharing of research data are central pillars of it. Many research funders, institutes, and universities are developing policies for managing those data in an Open Science environment. These policies stimulate good data governance and stewardship, but better alignment will reduce administrative burdens for both researchers, research organisations and funders.

Science Europe and NWO support such alignment by exploring ways to establish core requirements for research data management, as well as a list of trusted repositories where researchers can store their data for sharing. Science Europe and NWO encourage other

organisations in the broader research landscape to join forces in this endeavour.

### Consultations

Science Europe will launch a first round of consultation in early spring, asking for comments and inputs to a first draft that will be proposed by the SE Working Group on Research Data. Parties consulted will comprise SE Member Organisations, participants in the workshop and further interested organisations. The latter are invited to contact the SE Office. The Office foresees a rounds of drafts and consultations. The aim is to present core requirements for RDM in the autumn of 2018, and for the first organisations to implement these common principles in the course of 2019.

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### Support from European Commission

Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission, welcomed the initiative. He announced at the event that the Commission will support Science Europe and its Member Organisations in their efforts to co-ordinate the work of research funding and research performing organisations on Open Research Data policy: “Science Europe Members can be the game-changer in this area: the key to transition is in your hands and the Commission will be your partner in this endeavour.”



Robert-Jan Smits voiced the Commission's strong support for the initiative

### Framework for Discipline-specific Research Data Management

The launch of the initiative follows the recent publication of Science Europe's new framework for discipline-specific research data management protocols. This framework aims to make life easier for researchers writing data management plans for their own research and applications.



Research communities are invited to create domain-specific protocols based on this framework, outlining the essentials for data management in their area. These protocols will serve researchers as a template for researchers who can use these as a basis for their individual data management plans.

More information about the initiative, presentations from the workshop, the framework document as well as reports about work in progress can be found at <http://scieur.org/rdm-initiative> ■

## Open Data in Science: Challenges and Opportunities for Europe

**An International Council for Science (ICSU) workshop on 31 January in Brussels brought together science academies with representatives of public research funders, the publishing sector, and the European Commission. The event addressed the challenges and opportunities of Open Data for science and research in the European context.**

Peter Doorn, chair of the Science Europe Working Group on Research Data, was invited to present the work of Science Europe in the field of research data management. Together with his fellow panelist, Martin Stokhof from the European Research Council (ERC), Doorn addressed opportunities and challenges of the topic. He stressed its importance and the timeliness of taken actions now.

Developing policies for open research data is increasingly important in the context of the planned European Open Science Cloud

(EOSC). Head of Unit 'Open Data Policy and Science Cloud' from the European Commission, Jean-Claude Burgelman, announced a proposal for the EOSC in the second half of 2018.

The workshop once again underlined the importance of the topic of Open Science and Data Sharing and the necessity to agree on common grounds among the different stakeholders to move forward together. ■

## Global Research Council: Towards the 2018 Annual Meeting in Moscow

**On 22 and 23 January, the National Research Foundation of South Korea hosted a meeting of the International Steering Committee of the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Global Research Council (GRC) in Seoul. This committee is composed of representatives, hosts, and co-hosts of GRC regional meetings.**

In the 2017–2018 cycle of the GRC, participants were invited to revisit the six basic GRC principles for peer review and to reflect on their role in science diplomacy. Both topics, peer review and science diplomacy, will be at the heart of the discussion during the 2018 Annual Meeting (14to 16 May 2018 in Moscow).

Over the period from October 2017 to January 2018, a preparatory meeting was organised in each of the five GRC regions ahead of the Moscow meeting. Two Science Europe Member Organisations, FORMAS and the Swedish Research Council (VR), hosted the

European preparatory meeting on 22 and 23 November 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden.

The outcomes of the five regional meetings were presented and discussed in Seoul. They will now be consolidated into two standalone draft statements. These will be submitted to the GRC Governing Board for their consideration and recommended for adoption by the GRC participants in Moscow.

More information: <https://www.globalresearchcouncil.org/> ■



## EU Defends Higher Budget for Research and Innovation, But Budgetary Battle Not Yet Won

**The European Commission and the European Parliament both call for increased investment in research and innovation. However, the emergence of new policy priorities, the resistance in favour of the traditional agricultural and cohesion policies, and the Brexit budget deficit increase the complexity of the discussion.**

“The Future Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and the Erasmus+ programme must be spared from any budgetary cuts, and must rather be strengthened.” At the 9 January conference ‘Shaping our Future: Designing the next Multiannual Financial Framework’, in front of a crowded room of over a thousand people, Günther Oettinger, European Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, showed his support to increased spending in R&I and education in the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The following day, his position was backed by the College of Commissioners, and the European Parliament’s Committee on Budgets called for an FP9 budget of €120 billion.

Although this is good news for the scientific community, the budgetary battle is far from being won. Several voices within the EU and the Member States reject cuts for the two biggest traditional policies in Europe: the Common Agricultural Policy and the Cohesion Policy. In parallel, new challenges such as migration, security, and defence have been identified as new intervention domains that necessitate EU spending. Last, but not least, Brexit will leave a €12-billion deficit in the EU budget.

Commissioner Oettinger called for a blend of measures: combining cuts and efficiencies, an increase in the contribution of the EU-27 to reach 1.1–1.2% of gross national income (GNI), and additional own resources for the EU, such as through a tax on plastic import. The EP Committee on Budgets called for a more ambitious increase of the national contributions and pleaded for a contribution of 1.3% of the GNI. Unsurprisingly, some countries already expressed their opposition to such an increase, however others seemed open to the discussion.

The upcoming months will be crucial as the Commission announced its intent to release its MFF proposal in May, hoping for adoption in May 2019. To maximise the chance of an increase for research and innovation, Commissioner Moedas urges the scientific community, the national agencies for research and innovation, and Research Ministers to defend it towards national Finance Ministers and Heads of State and Government.

This message was reinforced in a recent meeting between the President of Science Europe, Marc Schiltz, and the Cabinet of Commissioner Moedas. ■

## Update from the Third Meeting of the ABS Consultation Forum

**At the third meeting of the Access and Benefit Sharing Consultation Forum on 18 December in Brussels, the European Commission informed the Consultation Forum that it is highly likely that it will take up to five years for Member States to adopt the draft Sector-specific Guidance Documents. In the meantime, the European Commission plans to prepare a summary of the Sector-specific Guidance Documents in 2018, as an amendment to the already published Horizontal Guidance Document.**

At the meeting, representatives from various sectors gave presentations on large-scale screening. They unanimously proposed that the due-diligence obligations of the Regulation should only apply after screening from selection onwards. Some experts argued that the due-diligence obligation should only be linked to those genetic materials that result in a commercial product, in other words that create benefits.

The Commission also updated participants on the status of DECLARE, an EU-wide, web-based tool it has established to enable users of genetic resources to submit the due-diligence declarations required by Article 7 of the Regulation and its Implementation to the relevant competent authorities.

### More information

Further information on the EU Access and Benefit Sharing Regulation will be provided in a briefing document for SE Member Organisations in early February. See also the SE Newsletters from January, June, September, and November 2016, as well as of March 2017, for more information. ■

EU Regulation 511/2014 deals with compliance measures for users of the Nagoya Protocol on ‘Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization’. The European Commission’s Directorate General for the Environment (DG ENV) established the ABS Consultation Forum to contribute to guidance on the scope of application and core obligations of the Regulation.

The Commission published a Horizontal Guidance Document in 2016 to assist citizens, businesses, and national authorities in the application of the Regulation. In addition, sector-specific guidance documents – including for public research – have been drafted by experts under the supervision of a consortium in close collaboration with Member States and the ABS Consultation Forum. Several unresolved issues remain, including large-scale screening.





## STOA Workshop on EU Mission-oriented Research and Innovation Policy

The European Parliament's scientific foresight unit, STOA, hosted an event on 24 January to explore strategies for building a mission-oriented approach in EU policies and the future Framework Programme.

Jerzy Buzek, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and Chair of the Committee for Industry, Research, and Energy (ITRE), and Christian Ehler, MEP, discussed 'the European way of life' and how missions are both about having a vision and values. "We need to address the common challenges together, and link our policies to effectively and measurably achieve our goals; that is what missions are for", said Ehler.

Kurt Vandenberghe from the Directorate General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission explained the need for a long-term vision with a positive narrative for Europe. He hopes that a new funding formula can generate breakthroughs and bring measurable results. Mariana Mazzucato from University College London, who has been recruited by the European Commission to advise on the benefits of mission-based funding, presented her case. "Economic growth has both a growth and a direction",

she said, "and Europe needs to direct the economic growth derived from research investment in a way that benefits all of society for the future."

The task is now to design such a mission-based approach in Europe. Each mission might have a different type of programme, and bottom-up approaches will be vital, although care will be needed to not duplicate existing programmes. Vandenberghe proposed two potential missions: having the first quantum computer in Europe by 2030, and better understanding climate change. Professor William Phillips, Nobel Prize for Physics winner, gave a lively lecture on quantum technology and explained how it is not only 'weird science', but could be revolutionary for society. He said that the full potential of the technology has yet to be realised.

The workshop programme can be found at <http://bit.ly/2Fyf413> ■

## Rationalisation of the Public-to-Public Partnerships Landscape

On 10 January, Robert-Jan Smits, Director-General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission, invited a small Science Europe delegation to present Science Europe recommendations on the rationalisation of the public-to-public partnerships landscape.

Science Europe proposes a dual approach in order to advance this rationalisation: the launch of a small number of large-scale, top-down initiatives in a few priority areas with clear European added value; and a flexible, bottom-up competitive selection of smaller-scale initiatives, driven by Member States. Science Europe does not offer a ready-to-use solution: instead, it articulates an issue faced by many of its Member Organisations and offers their expertise to address it in collaboration with involved parties (European Commission and Member States).

The European Commission services are considering a limited and targeted use of co-funding in the future Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. They also intend to place a moratorium on Article 185 initiatives: no new ones will be launched until a thorough evaluation of existing ones is completed. It is the European Commission's intention to go beyond the mere co-

ordination of (part of) national research programmes and advance their effective integration.

The 10 January meeting is the latest step of the communication plan dedicated to promoting the SE Policy Brief on Public-to-Public Partnerships in the Next Framework Programme (November 2017). Previous steps included:

- the formal public launch of the paper by the President of Science Europe at the 2017 Annual Joint Programming Conference; and
- the presentation of the Policy Brief's key messages by the Acting Director of Science Europe at the plenary meeting of the High Level Group for Joint Programming (GPC), a dedicated configuration of the European Research Area Committee (ERAC), on 4 December. ■

## Distributed Excellence: A Rationale for European Education, Research, and Innovation Funding?

'Distributed excellence' refers to the architecture of an education, research, and innovation system characterised by a variety of excellent research areas, disciplines, and clusters that are interconnected. This in contrast with the concept of only a few excellent 'lighthouses'. Can this concept strengthen the European knowledge triangle of education, research, and innovation? Can features of European funding programmes be based on 'distributed excellence'?

These are a few of the questions that opened the debate during the German Rectors' Conference on 23 January at the Bavarian Representation to the EU in Brussels. According to the panellists, 'excellence' as a concept is something that needs to be defined

more broadly in FP9 and cannot simply be based on a few aspects or a one-size-fits-all approach. The effort to bridge the innovation and knowledge gap that exists between EU countries and regions needs to be based on data that can illustrate which



regions excel in which areas. The information gathered by the European Research Council (ERC) on its grantees can serve as a good proxy for helping to identify areas in which different countries and regions can serve as centres for excellence, but other sources of data at a regional and national level will help to build a more comprehensive story.

Horizon 2020 made some important steps towards helping and supporting countries with smaller budgets by encouraging increased co-operation with more advanced countries and regions, particularly through the Teaming and Twinning initiatives. However,

for these activities to generate more knowledge exchange, governments on a national and regional level need to take policy actions in terms of adjustments to budgets and managerial procedures that can ensure more effective outcomes through such co-operation. Through better identification of areas of excellence and more targeted funding, the EU can move towards greater equilibrium in terms of research and innovation distribution.

#### More information

- Press release from the event: <http://bit.ly/2E2OJuU> ■

## InRoad Engagement Workshop

**InRoad is a two-year project aimed at improving the harmonisation and synchronisation of priority-setting, funding, and lifecycle management of research infrastructures (RI) across Europe. On 15 and 16 January, the InRoad consortium – co-ordinated by the Swiss National Science Foundation, a Science Europe Member Organisation – came to Brussels to host an engagement workshop to showcase what has been accomplished in its first year.**

The consortium also sought to open discussions and take suggestions as it embarks on the second half of the project. John Womersley, Director General of the European Spallation Source, opened the event with a keynote speech on the challenges and gaps for improving the effective co-ordination of national RI policies.

During the two-day conference, the consortium engaged over 80 stakeholders from 18 different countries. Highlights from the programme included the presentation of the InRoad Consultation Report, a presentation by the European Commission on its Long-term Sustainability Report, and a closing keynote by Barbara Haering, Board Member of ETH, on the gaps and challenges being addressed by InRoad. The conference programme was designed to take full advantage of the knowledge of the audience and encouraged feedback on the steps taken by InRoad thus far

and requested input on ways to improve and ensure a successful outcome in the final stage of the project.

Through its ongoing consultations and research, benefits to Science Europe Member Organisations include: identification and sharing of best practices in national RI roadmapping procedures; supporting RI policy development in Member States, Associated Countries and at European level; contributing to the emergence of sustainable approaches for RI; and, focused dialogues with the European Commission and other relevant stakeholders.

#### More information

- Press release and presentations from the event: <http://inroad.eu/press-room/>
- InRoad Consultation Report: <http://bit.ly/2rSpbvN>
- EC Long-term Sustainability Report: <http://bit.ly/2DRdLh8> ■

## Calendar of Upcoming Meetings

#### General Assemblies

01/06/18 General Assembly, in Madrid  
22/11/18 General Assembly, in Brussels

#### Governing Board Meetings

06/02/18 Extraordinary Governing Board, in Brussels  
22/03/18 Governing Board, in Brussels  
20/06/18 Governing Board, in Brussels  
03/10/18 Governing Board, in Brussels

#### Working Groups and High Level Policy Networks

15–16/03/18 HLPN on Cross-border Collaboration, in Brussels  
22/03/18 WG on Horizon 2020 and FP9, in Brussels  
24/04/18 WG on Horizon 2020 and FP9, in Brussels  
24/05/18 WG on Horizon 2020 and FP9, in Brussels  
18/06/18 WG on Horizon 2020 and FP9, in Brussels

#### Scientific Advisory Committee

16–17/04/18 SAC Meeting, in Brussels  
20–21/09/18 SAC Meeting, in Brussels  
21/11/18 SAC Symposium, in Brussels

#### Other Meetings and Events

31/05/18 High-level Workshop, hosted by CSIC in Madrid  
19/06/18 Workshop on Impact, in Ghent

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