

ERAC - Standing Information Point
Update on the activities of the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility

32nd plenary meeting
Agenda Item 5
Brussels, 2 December 2016

The [Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility](#) (PSF) provides support in the design, implementation and evaluation of research and innovation policy reforms, is demand-driven and responds to requests made by Member States and Associated Countries. Its support is either topic-specific (mutual learning exercises) or country-specific (peer reviews of national R&I systems, or specific support to a policy reform).

The attached summary lists 20 activities launched through the PSF since its start in 2015, and several additional projects planned for 2017, including to follow-up on the outcome of the 2016 call for expression of interest in the PSF activities. Notably, numerous countries expressed their interest in joining the mutual learning exercises (MLE) on innovation procurement (15 countries), on open science policies and practices (13 countries) and on performance-based funding of public research (10 countries). We note several countries' interest in the 2017 MLE on widening participation in Horizon 2020. Moreover country-specific supports will be provided to Poland (Peer Review in 2017) as well as to Tunisia and Georgia (Peer Review and specific support).

It is to be noted that there has been an increasing demand from Member States and Associated Countries for PSF support. Experience so far shows that Peer Reviews are most demanded by Cohesion and Associated Countries. Demand for Mutual Learning Exercises is stronger from those Member States with more developed R&I systems. The increasing interest in the PSF specific support indicates that countries need focused advice when addressing specific policy issues and implementing the corresponding policy actions. This is attested, for example, by the Bulgarian request to follow up on the recent PSF Peer Review by using the PSF specific support for developing a performance-based funding system and a model for the evaluation of the performance of its research institutions. It is proposed to organise a joint workshop with other international institutions in 2017 to discuss the results and lessons learnt from the PSF's activities.

A key asset of the PSF is that it counts on high-level expertise from individuals that have been responsible for R&I policy or performing organisations at the highest level in the Member States, who therefore have the experience and credibility to advise governments on major R&I reforms. Therefore the Commission invites ERAC delegates to make further **proposals concerning high-level expertise for the PSF** and it would welcome suggestions for names (**to be sent to RTD-PSF@ec.europa.eu**) that would allow further developing the PSF pool of high-level experts.¹

The PSF Knowledge Centre, launched in September 2016 in the framework of the joint website of the Research and Innovation Observatory and the Policy Support Facility 'RIO-PSF website'

¹ The first call for the ERAC proposals concerning the high-level expertise for the PSF was launched on 22 May 2015 and the names of the experts suggested were included in the PSF pool of experts.

(<https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/policy-support-facility>), makes available country-based and topic-based information on the PSF activities. On 11 November 2016 a series of [country-based infographics](#) that highlight strengths and weaknesses of Member States' research and innovation systems was released. These are set against the framework of the European Semester analysis and recommendations and pinpoint the country's participation in the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility activities.

Summary list of the concluded, ongoing and planned PSF activities

Please find below a summary of the concluded, ongoing and planned activities of the PSF. The activities foreseen for 2017 follow up on the outcome of the third call for expression of interest in the services of the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (circulated to ERAC on 26 July 2016).

I. PSF Peer Reviews of national R&I systems:

PSF Peer Reviews of national R&I systems are in-depth assessments of a country's R&I system carried out by a panel of experts and leading to concrete recommendations to the national authorities on reforms necessary to strengthen their R&I system.

- **Bulgaria** (final report published in October 2015: <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/library/horizon-2020-policy-support-facility-peer-review-bulgarian-research-and-innovation-system>);
- **Moldova** (final report published on 12 July 2016: <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/library/horizon-2020-policy-support-facility-peer-review-moldovan-research-and-innovation-system>);
- **Hungary** (pre-Peer Review report published on 12 October 2015: <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/library/horizon-2020-policy-support-facility-pre-peer-review-hungarian-research-and-innovation>; Peer Review final report published on 20 September 2016: <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/library/peer-review-hungarian-research-and-innovation-system>);
- **Ukraine** (final report to be presented in Kyiv on 19 December 2016, for the background report please consult https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/report/PSF_BgD_PeerReview-Ukraine-KIAX16002ENN_0.pdf);
- **Poland** (the focus of the Peer Review to be conducted in the first part of 2017 is on the structure of the higher education system and its links with research performing organisations as well as on the funding dimension);
- **Tunisia** (the initial focus of the Peer Review to be conducted in 2017 is on research funding, knowledge transfer and measures for strengthening R&D activities of the private sector).

II. PSF Specific support to countries

PSF specific support to countries aims at providing a set of concrete recommendations on how to tackle a specific R&I policy challenge and how to implement the accompanying reforms.

- **Malta**, Final report published on 5 July: <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/library/horizon-2020-policy-support-facility-specific-support-malta-monitoring-maltese-national>
- **Slovakia** on framework conditions for start-ups/ high growth innovative enterprises (final report to be published in December 2016)
- **Romania** on innovative entrepreneurship (to be finalised in March 2017)
- **Slovenia** on the internationalisation of science and higher education policies, and on the cooperation between the science base and businesses (starting in December 2016).
- **Bulgaria** on performance-based funding of public research and on evaluation of research institutions (to be conducted in the first part of 2017)
- **Lithuania** on attraction of innovation-oriented FDI and on science-business cooperation (to be conducted in the first part of 2017)
- **Latvia** on the funding system for public research, notably its governance and organisational aspects (to be conducted in the first part of 2017)
- **Georgia** on the implementation modalities of some recommendations from the 2015 IncoNet Peer Review

III. PSF Mutual learning exercises

PSF mutual learning exercises (MLEs) focus on specific/ operational R&I challenges of interest to several volunteering countries, and draw on a hands-on project-based exchange of good practice.

- **Pilot Mutual Learning Exercise on measures to stimulate business research and innovation**, during which the new MLE methodology was proposed, was concluded in June 2015.

Three exercises were conducted as from January 2016 and several country workshops are organised in April-June 2016 with an impressive engagement of participating host countries:

- **Administration and monitoring of R&D tax incentives** with the active participation of **LV, PT, BE, HR, FR, NO** and country visits hosted by FR and UK; **the final workshop will be held in December 2016;**
- **Evaluation of business R&D grant schemes** with the active participation of **NO, DK, ES, SE, DE** and country visits hosted by DK and ES; **the final workshop was held on 3 November 2016;**
- **Evaluation of complex public private partnerships** with the active participation of **BE, NO, BG, SE** and country visits hosted by SE and NO; **the final workshop was held on 19 October 2016.**

Five additional MLEs were launched in 2016:

- **Alignment and Interoperability of research programmes (national coordination)** – ongoing, with the active participation of **SI, PT, EE, DK, SE, NO and MT.**
- **Performance-based funding of public research organisations.** with the active participation of **AT, CZ, CY, EE, ES, NO, SI, SE, PT, AR** (scoping workshop took place on 7 September 2016 and the kick-off takes place in January 2017)

- **Innovation procurement:** concept note on this activity was included in Annex II of the Third Expression of Interest circulated to ERAC on 26 July; 15 countries committed to actively participate in this MLE: **AT, EL, EE, LV, ES, PT, DE, SI, FR, IR, NO, TR, BE, LT, SE**; kick-off meeting takes place in January 2017;
- **Open science policies and practices:** concept note on this activity was included in Annex III of the Third Expression of Interest circulated to ERAC on 26 July; 13 countries committed to actively participate in this MLE: **LT, SI, FR, BE, LV, ES, CH, PT, HR, MD, AT, AR, SE**; kick-off meeting takes place in January 2017;
- **MLE on evaluation of business R&D grant schemes- phase 2:** to follow-up on the currently finalised MLE on ex-post evaluation of business R&D grants; concept note on this activity will be circulated to ERAC in the coming weeks.

Additional MLEs to be launched in 2017 include:

- **Alignment and Interoperability of research programmes Second MLE on "resources "(tbc)** based on feedback and success of first MLE with the participation of **CZ, EE, RO, PT, SI AT, IT, NO** (and others tbc);
- **Widening participation in Horizon 2020 (tbc):** several EU-13 countries have expressed their keen interest in such an exercise. The set of follow-up information will be communicated to ERAC in due time.

Please note that the PSF remains open for the ad-hoc requests for support. For any further information please contact RTD-PSF@ec.europa.eu.