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Response to the Green Paper on a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation

North Sweden European Office welcomes the approach on a common strategic framework for research and innovation on EU-level addressing the grand challenges. We encourage the approach for better program synergies between CSF and future cohesion funding where the regions play an essential role. We strongly support the approach of the knowledge triangle; the region sees a successful connection between education and innovation systems.

Strong clusters and innovations are formed at regional level with support from regional, national and EU-level. To achieve Europe 2020 goals the territorial dimension of CSF is important. We also need a large variety of instruments to help the SMEs grow and develop to create new jobs. We would like a CSF that enables greater participation from the private sector, in particular SMEs, in development activities. All RTD is place based in different contexts which need to be kept in mind. North Sweden European Office represents a highly innovative region with world class research and globally competitive companies even though we are not a cosmopolitan urban area. We represent a rural peripheral region nevertheless globally competitive.

We need a CSF which is based on excellence, has better focus on humanities and social sciences and is open for all actors, male and female, to participate in. We also need a CSF which fills the gap in the late stage of innovation concerning validation and market preparedness for start-ups, where there is a lack in funding opportunities both on national and on EU level today throughout Europe. We need financial tools which can deal with uncertainty and open up for clusters to be part of projects as a legal entity, as this would facilitate the participation of SMEs.

The access to raw materials, sparsely populated areas, long distances and white winters have made northern Sweden highly competitive in a wide range of RTD-areas on a global level, for example forestry, space science, green biotech, sustainable energy and materials science. We are part of the Barents region with huge natural resources and the Arctic where the human footprint on the environment is very visible, highlighting one of the grand challenges Europe and the world is facing.

We believe forest based biorefinery and bioenergy should be a core area in the next framework programme. Major societal challenges such as global warming and tightening supplies of energy must be turned into sustainable solutions and can only be tackled by smart green solutions on international, national, regional and local level.

Bio4Energy is a Swedish strategic research area, encompassing Umeå University (coordinator), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Luleå University of Technology and a number of research institutes and industry in a closely connected

region in northern Sweden. It is an EU StarColibri project and has global partnerships in countries as Australia, Canada, China and Russia.

Bio4Energy is also addressing the Strategic Energy Technology (SET)-Plan, ETPs as Forest Based Sector Technology Platform and Plants for the future and EIT - European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

90 percent of the iron produced in the EU originates from our region. The iron and ore industry in northern Europe is one of the world's most advanced linked to applied sciences in IST, energy and environmental sustainable management. Raw materials produced by the extractive sector are a key factor for sustainable growth in industrialized, emerging and developing economies and one of the grand challenges CSF should take into consideration.

North Sweden is a breeding-ground for distance-spanning technologies, among which eHealth holds a strategic position. The aim is to empower the patient – to make it possible for all citizens to access their medical records, to communicate with the healthcare system in a safe way from their homes whenever they need it. This development will only be possible if we can find interoperable ICT solutions that support patients and professionals involved with reliable information through the whole healthcare process. The development has so far been to focused on the technical solutions and IT-experts but it needs to be also look at the patients/citizens and professionals involved in the health and social care. Change management is also crucial to achieve success in implementation and CSF must be open for validation projects.

Many aspects of life now depend on global as well as local determinants, making it best sense to take a global view of health. Global health is relatively new as a concept, but depends critically on developing integrated views of local contexts within the bigger picture. This thinking is reflected in the ethos of the Umeå Centre for Global Health Research (UCGHR) at Umeå University, which looks at many detailed local health issues around the globe, as well as stepping back to see the bigger picture of global health. Some of the local issues are distinctly associated with northern Sweden. Equally important local issues include the effects of AIDS-related mortality in southern Africa, strategies against dengue fever in Thai schools, and many others. Stepping back to the global level, big questions about making accurate estimates of cause of death patterns, understanding the rapid transitions towards increasingly elderly populations currently experienced by many countries, and delivering health care effectively and cost-effectively have to be considered on a wider scale. UCGHR is in a very strong position to integrate near and far considerations of local health issues into the wider arena of global health.

Examples of current research areas include reproductive health, nutrition, child growth, the evaluation of health interventions and the emerging epidemic of non-communicable diseases in transitional societies. Studies of HIV/AIDS in Africa, sexual and reproductive health in Africa and Latin America and of community interventions in northern Sweden have all been performed using the application of epidemiology, qualitative methods and health economics, for example.

The multidisciplinary resources working together on global health issues constitute a strong research environment that is currently addressing many of the challenges in global health: epidemiological transition; health and ageing; design and evaluation of health interventions from the unborn child to old age; childhood and welfare; health economics; gender, social inequality and health; and climate change and health. North Sweden European Office welcomes a CSF that balances well between research and development driven by science, society and industry towards the global challenges, without losing sight of the unprejudiced fundamental research.

We welcome a CSF facilitating dialogue and collaboration between actors in society improving communication and exchange of knowledge in order to improve innovation and policymaking in line with the targets of the Innovation Union.

On behalf of our regional stakeholders including representatives from academia, business and public sector in northern Sweden.

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North Sweden European Office is the EU-office for the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten, the two northernmost counties of Sweden. The founding organisations are the Municipalities, the County Councils, the County Administration Boards, the Federation of private enterprises and the Chambers of Commerce in Norrbotten and Västerbotten as well as Luleå University of Technology, Umeå University and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Umeå.