



**EuropaForum
Norra Sverige**

Europaforum Norra Sverige (EFNS) are giving their response to

ECs GRÖNBOK

Från utmaningar till möjligheter: Mot ett gemensamt strategiskt ramverk för EU:s finansiering av forskning och innovation

The answers represent the position of elected representatives in the four northernmost regions of Sweden. The response has been shaped in close collaboration between the regions.

Att arbeta tillsammans

1. Hur kan det gemensamma strategiska ramverket göra EU:s finansiering av forskning och innovation attraktivare och mer lättåtkomlig för deltagarna? Vad behövs förutom en enda kontaktpunkt med gemensamma IT-verktyg, ett enda informationsställe som stöd, en förenklad uppsättning finansieringsinstrument som utan avbrott täcker hela innovationskedjan, och ytterligare steg mot minskad byråkrati?

Answer 1 :

The rationale for the European Union to enhance accessibility and attraction of funds directed at research and innovation is evident and the ambition to simplify the structure of available funds is supported by EFNS [EuropaForum Northern Sweden]. The EFNS has high expectations on the long term effects of EU funded research and innovation initiatives as a key to unlock the potential of the northern sparsely populated regions in Sweden. These expectations are divided into several categories:

Firstly the northern regions can become stronger contributors based on their experience, competence and foremost the natural prerequisites in a number of important areas of research and innovation.

Secondly, specific areas of research i.e. alternative energy production, energy efficiency, development and marketing of specific industry services [space industry, mining industry, auto industry, tourism industry etc.] are of strategic importance to the NSPA regions, as well as to Europe in a wider context.

Within the EFNS regions, there are a number of areas for development that has not reached their inherent potential to provide jobs and prosperity. Examples are energy efficiency, public service supply chains, natural resource based value chains etc.. At the same time, this points at an unused potential for development and added value for a wider European context. There are several areas where there is a consensus regarding the necessity for joint policy formation and the subsequent priorities aiming at unlocking the potential growth and quality of research and innovation in the EFNS regions.

The ambition to facilitate one set of financial instruments, covering the whole chain of phases, from inception to market introduction, is an initiative of great importance when innovative concepts are expected to contribute to a significant and knowledge based growth. Such an integration are well in line with the strategic objectives endorsed by the NSPA.

2. Hur ska EU:s finansiering på bästa sätt omfatta hela innovationskedjan från forskning till marknadsintroduktion?

Answer 2 :

The key to integration of research and innovation, with both the establishment and development of successful companies as well as the enhancement of the competitive edge among existing companies is depending on the early dialogue between innovators and the innovator support facilitated by the regional level.

The defining initiative tying university led research and market introduction together, would be a greater involvement of regional bodies in the coordination of support functions for the support of university led research and other efforts in other phases of the innovation support system.

3. Vilka särdrag hos EU-finansieringen kan maximera nyttan av åtgärder på EU-nivå? Bör man betona mobilisera andra finansieringskällor?

Answer 3 :

The benefit for any Region or University, or innovative company from joining and taking part in an EU funded initiative is the build-up of professional and personal

networks of organisations and people addressing issues of common interest. The time invested in formation of such networks is generally well spent. A continuous focus on excellence should be combined with the ambition to establish and develop competences of critical mass in areas of development where natural prerequisites are evident and well documented by regional priorities. Hence, the funds available in i.e. objective 2 (or corresponding funds) should be activated in support of initiatives aiming directly at cooperation within the future common strategic framework for research and innovation.

4. Hur bör man använda EU:s finansiering av forskning och innovation så att den på bästa sätt sammanför medlemsstaternas resurser? Hur bör man stödja gemensam programplanering mellan grupper av medlemsstater?

Answer 4 :

The integration of EU funds directed at research, with other measures down-stream towards market introduction, marks a shift of paradigm. In the ideal case regions and universities would adopt to this, in recognition of the potential for jobs and growth, and make priorities in accordance with this new insight. In reality, several counter-acting mechanisms are foreseen. A starting point could be thematic gatherings of regions and universities where the potential of sectors could be scrutinised and assessed. These conclusions could be used to set up flagship initiatives, or something of the kind, that would enable interested parties to merge resources and competences in joint projects. Here, the capacity to conduct leading research has to be balanced with the strength and focus of the innovation support chain.

5. Vilken balans bör finnas mellan mindre, riktade projekt och större, strategiska?

Answer 5 :

There should definitely be a balance. Without a balance between the two there is a potential risk of reducing participation from f.e. SMEs in the EU funded research projects. Though large strategic projects aim to fulfill the strategic goals set by instruments such as EU2020 the small projects have an impact on the market in short term as well as in achieving the strategic goals. Equality between larger scale projects and small focused ones will increase research and innovation.

6. Hur ska kommissionen se till att det råder balans mellan en unik uppsättning regler som tillåter kraftiga förenklingar och nödvändigheten av ett visst mått av flexibilitet och mångfald för att uppnå målen för olika instrument, och samtidigt ta hänsyn till behoven hos olika stödmottagare, framförallt små och medelstora företag?

Answer 6 :

The alignment of EU funded research with EU2020 and other expressions of growth orientation has to lead to reform of the framework surrounding the rules and regulations for the financial instruments. One measure would be to widen the definition of lead partners encouraged to assume responsibilities in the programme. Another measure would be to find a new balance in the assessment procedure. Should the assessment support the desired alignment with “growth objectives and inherent growth potential” the necessary evaluation of scientific merit has to be balanced with an assessment of actual potential as well as the relevance in relation to regional priorities and alignment with steering documents giving guidelines to priorities with in the innovation support chain.

7. Hur ska man mäta om EU:s finansiering av forskning och innovation varit framgångsrik? Vilka prestandaindikatorer bör användas?

Answer 7 :

In addition to the necessary scientific audit such as publications and citations, indexes etc. one way of addressing this issue should be by application of qualitative documentation and evaluation of the degree of coherence between the scientific objectives reached in the research activities and the effects the research activities have had in the regions benefiting from the research itself. There are, for evident reasons, a considerable time-lag, between the research initiative and subsequent steps that could lead to a successful market introduction. For many scientific achievements the business potential is unknown or unexploited. There are reasons to anticipate that a joint effort during the programming and planning period could detect, and affect, planned initiatives adding to the potential for manufacture and job-creation. Such an early intervention in the planning process is necessary in order to apply indicators and measurements documenting the over-all success of the EU-funded research and innovation.

8. Hur ska EU:s finansiering av forskning och innovation förhållas till regional och nationell finansiering? Hur ska finansieringen komplettera dels medel från den framtida sammanhållningspolitiken, som ska hjälpa mindre utvecklade regioner i EU, dels programmen för landsbygdsutveckling?

Answer 8 :

See the answer to question #7. An early assessment of the coherence between EU-funded research and development and regional development strategies (i.e. academic capacity building in strategic areas for development) has several benefits. An early warning system would enable regions and other actors to coordinate efforts financed by neighbouring financial instruments. If initiatives initiated by the non-university side was encouraged and in the end financed by EU-funds for innovation and research, there would be a greater incentive to coordinate business driven or job-creation driven initiatives, supported by universities or other research institutions.

Att lösa samhällsproblem

9. *Hur kan ökad fokusering på samhällsproblem påverka balansen mellan forskning som drivs av nyfikenhet och verksamhet som är programstyrd?*

Answer 9 :

In many areas there is a true curiosity regarding the synergies between research and the efficiency by which the surrounding society is solving its challenges. Generally the universities are hosting an enormous competence that easily could be developed into a basis for true and tangible competence for the surrounding society. The substantial achievement would be if EU-funded research and innovation would contribute to better decisions [evidence based policy vs. policy based evidence].

The strong component of cooperation between regions and universities significant for EU-funded research and development, already has the modalities necessary. In order for this mechanism to develop further, the way ahead would be to allow a greater degree of participation from regions and other stakeholders in the programming and planning phases of calls for research and development projects for certain fields of research. [welfare, efficiency of utilization of public resources etc.].

10. Bör det finnas utrymme för ”nedifrån och upp”-verksamhet?

Answer 10 : Generally the EFNS would answer this positively. Especially when research and development are of crucial importance in order to reach strategic regional development objectives.

The starting point for such a situation would be divided into the following prerequisites:

- 1) an evident potential for regional development following a strong university presence,
- 2) an evident synergy between the university led research and development activities, and immediate and tangible activities needed in order to achieve regional development objectives, and
- 3) evident synergies following inter-regional and inter-university cooperation.

In such cases, the acceptance by the EU-funded support chain for research and development should be concerned with the capacity building of both the academic institution, in the case this is needed, as well as the capacity building at the non-academic side (policy and employer) in cases where the potential for jobs and growth are evident.

11. Hur kan man se till att EU:s finansiering av forskning och innovation på bästa sätt stödjer politikutformning och framtidsinriktad verksamhet?

Answer 11 :

The willingness to embrace the whole chain of innovation indicates that this situation will be improved in the coming years. By integration of research and development towards market introduction, more conditions and indicators resembling i.e. the Interreg IVC programme can be encouraged and monitored. The involvement of regional and local policy makers can be anticipated to influence policy formation based on impetus from EU funded research and development. The EFNS are declaring a readiness to make priorities based on results and conclusions merging from EU community funded research where applicable. Considering the wider interpretation of “Innovation”, in the sense of stakeholder’s interaction, this becomes even more attractive since many of the challenges in northern Sweden are shared by other regions. At the same time the potential for transfer of methodologies and practices from Northern Sweden to other regions in Europe are depending on validation and analysis by researchers.

12. Hur kan man förbättra Gemensamma forskningscentrets roll i fråga om att stödja politikutformning och ta itu med samhällsproblem?

Answer 12 :

JRC, like other EC institutions, are depending on other stakeholders at all levels, in order to achieve a broad acceptance for necessary priorities. It is of great importance that the competence within JRC becomes readily accessible for other players in the innovation support chain, thereby contributing to an improved coordination of research and development for the benefit of EU2020.

The feasible ways to achieve this would be tied to directions, new patterns of cooperation and resources. A closer and more visible cooperation with the OECD, and a function where strategic priorities in regions regarding innovator support and university interaction could be thinkable.

13. Hur kan man göra EU:s forskning och innovation intressantare och se till att fler medborgare och det civila samhället engagerar sig?

Answer 13 :

In addition to “communication of results etc.”, the new approach requires “involvement of stakeholders”. One way would be to ask for evidence of support for the suggested research initiative by the regional level, either by councils and assemblies or by support in regional priorities and steering documents. Support by the regional level would give legitimacy and attention early in the process.

Att förbättra konkurrenskraften

14. Hur ska EU:s finansiering på bästa sätt ta hänsyn till innovationens hela bredd, inklusive icke-teknisk innovation, miljöinnovation och social innovation?

Answer 14 :

By stressing “efficiency in resource utilization” as an objective by its own merit, there are reason to believe that more resources and “calls” will be directed at the social sciences with the focus on the innovation support system etc.. The elevation of the current “on-going evaluation” to a strategic science based interactive reseach approach would mean a lot to both the programme and as help for the stakeholders to achiever better results and better control of the capitalization of the programme for research and innovation.

15. Hur kan man förstärka industrins deltagande i EU:s forsknings- och innovationsprogram? Hur ska man stödja gemensamma teknikinitiativ (som de som lanserades i det aktuella ramprogrammet) eller olika former av offentlig-privata partnerskap? Vilken roll bör europeiska teknikplattformar spela?

Answer 15 :

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16. Vilka typer av små och medelstora företag bör få stöd på EU-nivå, och hur bör det stödet se ut? Hur ska det stödet komplettera nationella och regionala stöd? Vilka åtgärder bör man vidta för att kraftigt underlätta små och medelstora företags deltagande i EU:s forsknings- och innovationsprogram?

Answer 16 :

17. Hur bör man utforma öppna, enkla och snabba genomförandeprogram (t.ex. genom att bygga på åtgärderna för framtida och ny teknik och marknadsintroduktionsprojekt i fråga om miljöinnovation i CIP) så att man får till stånd flexibelt utnyttjande och kommersialisering av nya idéer, främst från små och medelstora företags sida?

Answer 17 :

18. Hur kan man öka användningen av finansieringsinstrument på EU-nivå (aktie-och skuldbaserade)?

Answer 18 :

One way would be to develop the JEREMIE approach in order to direct capital to research intensive innovations emearing from EU funded research and innovation.

19. Bör man införa nya sätt för att stödja forskning och innovation, främst genom offentlig upphandling, inklusive regler om förkommersiell upphandling, och/eller priser?

Answer 19 :

Yes, exceptions should be allowed in order to verify new technology and new services.

20. Hur kan man i reglerna för immateriella rätter som styr EU:s finansiering hitta rätt balans mellan konkurrensaspekter och behovet av åtkomst till och spridning av vetenskapliga resultat?

Answer 20 :

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