Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013)

2005/0043(COD) - 29/04/2009 - Follow-up document

This report assesses progress in implementing Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7) and what remains to be done to fully reach its original objectives. The available evidence for 2007 and 2008 indicates that **FP7 had a good start**:

- the response of the scientific community to its calls for proposals shows a strong demand for Community research. Nearly 36,000 proposals were received, and over 5,500 proposals were selected for funding. The overall participation rate is at 21.7 %, taking into account two-stage application procedures;
- the quality of the evaluation process is recognised, with 91% of the evaluators stating that the quality of the evaluation process was similar to or better than national evaluations in which they participated.

The **novel approaches embodied in FP7** seem to be paying off:

- the success of the European Research Council is evident from the more than 11.000 proposals received for the first call;
- 5 large-scale public-private partnerships – Joint Technology Initiatives (JTI) – have been set up, each as an independent legal entity under Article 171 of the EC Treaty: Innovative Medicines (IMI); Embedded Computing Systems (ARTEMIS); Clean Sky; Nanoelectronics (ENIAC) and the Fuel Cells & Hydrogen (FCH) JTI;
- demand for the new Risk Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) has been strong since its launch in June 2007, with 30 RSFF operations approved and the value of signed loans reaching EUR 2 billion by the beginning of 2009;
- 2 agencies - the Research Executive Agency and the ERC Executive Agency – have been set up to ensure efficient management of a continuously growing FP7 budget without direct staff increases in the Commission;
- progress has been made in simplifying participation in FP7.

Some issues deserve **further attention and reflection**:

- the adjusted overall share of SMEs participation in retained proposals under the specific programmes "Cooperation" and "Capacities" is around 11% in terms of requested EC contribution;
- below average FP7 participation rates for most new Member States are balanced by higher financial contributions: EU 12 participants obtained almost 5% of the total requested FP7 contribution, compared with a 2.8% share of EU12 in the total EU27 intramural R&D expenditure.

Conclusion: FP7 is adapting to help the EU meet its goals of creating a low carbon, knowledge-based society. It seeks to increase its leverage effect on public and private R&D investment and to diversify its instruments in order to maximise European added value. FP7 remains a crucial instrument to promote scientific excellence and technological development, responding to EU policy priorities and the needs of industry and society. The current adverse economic context underlines its importance even more. FP7 contributes to sustained research efforts, both private and public, as exemplified in the public private partnership initiatives for green cars, energy efficient buildings and factories of the future launched as part of the European Recovery Plan.

In order to obtain advice for further improving and possibly adapting FP7, the Commission will be seeking advice from an independent expert group, which will undertake an Interim Evaluation of FP7. Their mandate should be adopted in autumn 2009, and the evaluation should be completed in the autumn of 2010.