



PRIORITY SECTOR
Innovation, Research,
Education and
Competitiveness

Programme area n°2 Research

OBJECTIVE

Enhanced research-based knowledge development

AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Research cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries
- > Research within the priority sectors and/or programme areas of the EEA and Norway Grants or in other agreed areas
- > Application of research results
- > Capacity building in research, including supporting the careers of female researchers and early stage researchers
- > Participation and cooperation of beneficiary countries in the European Research Area (ERA)

SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Collaborative projects in basic and applied research
- > Support for the establishment of long-term strategic partnerships between research institutions in donor and beneficiary countries
- > Research within smart specialisation priorities
- > Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH)
- > Research targeting societal challenges and social innovation
- > Support reinforcing the links between innovation, research and education (“the knowledge triangle”)
- > Short term mobility schemes for researchers and students
- > Support for the recruitment of researchers from abroad into beneficiary country research institutions
- > Measures addressing gender imbalance in science and research
- > Support for the active participation of beneficiary countries in ERA multilateral research cooperation, such as ERA-net, Joint Programming Initiatives (JPI), the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), and macro-regional strategies
- > Strengthening beneficiary countries’ participation in Horizon 2020, e.g. in the European Research Council (ERC), through capacity building activities, such as support in developing project applications, training, and building networks that include donor countries

RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Social and economic development in Europe depends on research and innovation. Increasing and strengthening research investments are priorities in all European countries. Europe 2020 has a goal of increasing research and development (R&D) investments to 3% of GDP. Individual EU Member States and EEA EFTA countries have set specific national targets.

European and international cooperation in research and innovation is a priority shared by all European countries. Transnational European research cooperation is promoted through the EU Framework Programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020. However, limited economic resources and the instability of research funding pose special challenges to beneficiary countries, both in meeting their R&D policy goals and in fully participating in international cooperation.

The European Research Area (ERA) promotes transnational European research cooperation and is part of the Europe 2020 Innovation Union Flagship Initiative, a key instrument in achieving the goals set out in the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth. The ERA is an effort to create a genuine European 'internal market' in research, including increased coordination of national research activities. ERA activities and priorities have given rise to new European activities such as: Horizon 2020, Joint Programming Initiatives, network activities and cooperation on research infrastructure. In all these activities and mechanisms, beneficiary countries have at present a low rate of participation.

The donor countries share the ERA priorities and Iceland and Norway take part in Horizon 2020 and other ERA activities. There is great potential to increase research capacity in beneficiary countries through cooperation with donor countries, both through direct bilateral relations and within joint ERA activities.

PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > All research projects shall include cooperation between donor and beneficiary countries
- > Priority shall be given to bilateral partnerships offering added value
- > Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) shall be eligible participants in all programmes
- > Dissemination of research results shall be included in all programmes

BILATERAL INTEREST

Research within the EEA and Norway Grants has a strong bilateral character. The 2014-2021 funding shall build on bilateral relations developed in 2004-2014 and further expand bilateral cooperation in this area for the future.