



To whom it may concern

ICIS Secretariat

your reference
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Green Paper Common Strategic Framework for EU research and funding

Response and recommendations from the International Centre of Integrated assessment and Sustainable development (ICIS) - Maastricht University.

About ICIS

The International Centre of Integrated assessment and Sustainable development (ICIS) is an interdisciplinary research institute at Maastricht University. ICIS was founded in 1998 and now has a staff of about 30 people. ICIS addresses complex societal issues facing the planet and its inhabitants. Its aims are to conduct research and provide education in the fields of integrated assessment and sustainable development. At ICIS, researchers of various nationalities conduct theoretical, empirical and policy-relevant research. Such integrative studies involve analysis of the mutual inter-linkages between economic, environmental, institutional and socio-cultural processes associated with a complex issues, such as urban development, tourism, health, water management, and mobility, as well as analyses of impacts of developments and the possibilities for transitions. Our scientific research forms an excellent basis for the training course and programmes that ICIS offers at bachelor, master, and PhD levels. Motivated by the belief that science and education are able to contribute greatly to a more sustainable development, ICIS thus stimulates integration in sustainability thinking and action at different societal levels through its research, education and policy-advisory roles.

The Green paper from a sustainability perspective

Reasoning from our sustainability perspective, we provide the following recommendations for the Green paper on a common strategic framework for EU research and innovation Funding.

We welcome the ambition to achieve a coherent strategic framework for EU research and innovation funding. Merging various specific funding programmes will improve access to relevant funds. We underpin the findings of Section 3 that, amongst others, reducing complexity, avoiding duplication and fragmentation, simplifying and broadening participation will improve the quality, cost-effectiveness and impact of the conducted research. Also, we support main foci of the CSF, including a direct relation with European policy, tackling societal challenges, strengthening competitiveness, and strengthening Europe's science base.

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We also recognize a number of opportunities that deserve to be highlighted to avoid the risk that they are missed. In this perspective, we first underline the contribution by the EU project VISION RD4SD¹ (VISION Research and Development for Sustainable Development) in which ICIS is a partner. We strongly support VISION's recommendations that the Green paper:

- Should make better use of the cross-cutting theme of Sustainable Development. The various societal challenges being faced in the EU should not be considered in isolation, but in their mutual coherence, from an integrated sustainability perspective. As such, the theme of sustainable development should be included more explicitly in the Green paper as THE underlying and cross-cutting theme.
- Should focus not only on *technological* innovation, but rather cover the broad scope of sustainability innovations, including its technological, social, and societal, structural and systemic and cultural dimensions.
- Should focus more on communication, knowledge transfer and co-production. This implies a shift from disciplinary, towards inter- and transdisciplinary modes of science, in which scientists, the private sector, NGOs, and other societal stakeholders collaborate in addressing sustainability challenges.
- Should place a stronger focus on HOW to support research and innovation via the CSF. This implies, for example, a greater flexibility within programmes and their individual projects. Given the complex nature of complex societal problems, allowing more open-ended outcomes may lead to better products for addressing sustainability challenges.

Moreover, the staff at ICIS would like to add that:

- Innovation is a means to accomplish various ends, but is not an end in itself. For innovation to be useful it must be oriented toward visionary goals and contextualized by specifying the ends that it is intended to achieve. The concept of sustainable development with its normative goals provides the needed orientation and sets design principles for the innovation paradigm that the EU seeks to support. The opportunity to link innovation to sustainable development explicitly should therefore not be missed.
- The CSF rightly focuses on research that contributes directly to EU policy, concretely by supporting EU2020. However, from a sustainability perspective, the time horizon 2020 is limited. The CSF, in our view, should contribute to longer-term societal challenges, e.g. on a time horizon of 2050 and beyond. From this perspective, achieving sustainable production and consumption whilst avoiding economic collapse, reaching the stated EU 2050 2° climate target, and – in general – ensuring a development that remains within planetary boundaries, are some of the great societal challenges of our time.

¹ VISION RD4SD is a Coordination and Support Action (CSA, 2011-2013), financially supported by the European Commission 7th Framework Program and coordinated by the Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (Formas).

- To achieve those challenges, structural societal transformation and innovation is required, on the economic, institutional, technological, and social-cultural levels. Managing such structural change requires a new type of governance, visionary, adaptive and deliberative, with a strong focus on horizontal actor relations, broad stakeholder participation, and network management. Inter- and transdisciplinary research addressing such new forms of governance and societal innovation should be at the core of CSF research themes.
- Such new forms of governance require integrative methods. Integrated Assessment is an example of a methodological toolbox that contributes to developing integrated visions, understanding complex societal interactions, monitoring the sustainability of development, and including stakeholder perspectives into a coherent sustainability assessment of complex societal issues. Integrative research – building on disciplinary knowledge - should thus be a main focus of the CSF.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Martens', with a large, sweeping initial 'P' and a horizontal line extending across the name.

Prof.dr. P. Martens
Scientific Director ICIS