



The FET Flagship model

A brief overview and FAQs on Partnering Projects

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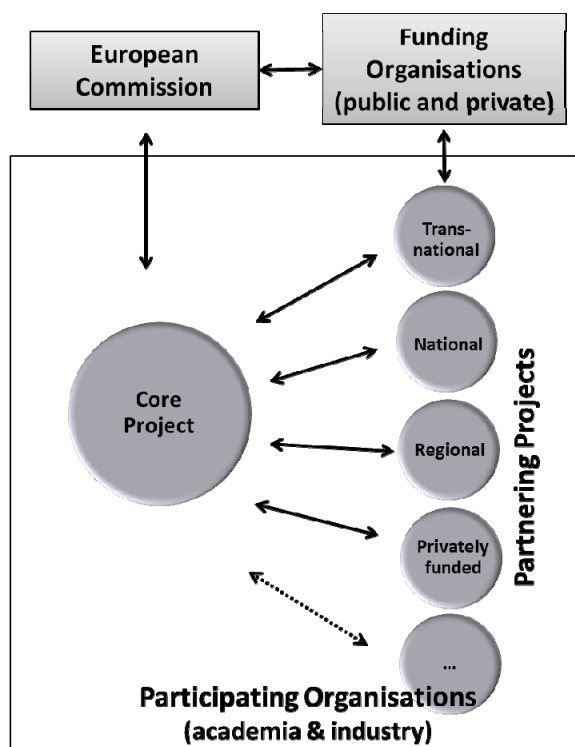
Disclaimer: This document represents work in progress. It is a living document that will be regularly updated as experience is acquired on the selection and integration of partnering projects in the Flagships.

1. The FET Flagship Model

FET Flagships (shortly Flagships) are long-term, large scale research initiatives aiming to solve ambitious S&T challenges, such as understanding the human brain or exploiting the potential of new materials like graphene. They are bringing together excellent research teams across various disciplines, sharing a unifying goal and an ambitious research roadmap to achieve it. In order to address their ambitious objectives Flagships require:

- (i) Setting up large-scale partnerships that bring together the leading researchers from a large number of research organisations, including academia and industry;
- (ii) Commitment to a strong science investment over a long time period that cannot be made alone by the European Commission or any single Member State.

With Flagships, the Commission proposes *a new partnering model* for long-term European co-operative research. This *model* is built around a large **Core Project** and a number of **Partnering Projects**. The Core Project ensures the scientific leadership, continuity and cohesion of the Flagship and is funded by the Commission. The Partnering Projects bring extra knowledge, skills and resources to the Flagship. They can address specific science and technology areas of the Flagship's research roadmap; focus on technology transfer activities; contribute as early users or become early adopters of the Flagships technologies, etc. For each Flagship, there is a collaboration framework that defines the application procedure the selection criteria, and the integration mechanisms of Partnering Projects into the Flagship. Both the Core Project and the Partnering Projects contribute to the management of the Flagship and the definition of its research roadmap.



The Flagship may also decide to put in place other forms of collaboration than Partnering Projects with interested researchers or research organisations, when this is preferred by the involved parties.

Half of the Flagship budget is planned to come from the EU funds. The other half would come mainly from the Member States and possibly the private sector, through financing Partnering Projects and also through in-kind contributions to the Flagship from participating organisations¹. To support the Member States in coordinating their contributions to the Flagships, the Commission is financing an ERANET action, called FLAG-ERA².

A **governance structure** is being set up to ensure that the Flagships have a well-coordinated implementation in H2020. The aim is to allow for efficient decision making of strategic nature, including assessing the overall progress of Flagships and planning optimal allocation and use of funding and resources. The Flagship governance structure includes:

- The 'Board of Funders', bringing together the Commission and the Member States with the aim to define and plan the financial support to both Flagships.
- The 'Framework Partnership Board', ensuring regular and transparent exchange of information between the Core Project consortium of each Flagship and the Commission.
- The 'Flagship Governance Forum', a discussion forum aiming to achieve efficient inter-working amongst the main stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Flagships (Core Project and Partnering Projects, the Member States and the Commission).

This governance structure will be adjusted if necessary in close cooperation with all the involved Flagship stakeholders.

¹ Such in-kind contributions, from organisations in the Core and Partnering Projects, include access to research infrastructures, experimental facilities and use of technical equipment, extra personnel, etc.

² FLAG-ERA (<http://www.flagera.eu/>) brings together funding agencies and research ministries from Member States and Associated Countries with the aim to support the two Flagships. Their objective is to enhance complementarities and synergies of their national and regional research programmes, create a discussion forum between them and launch joint calls that address the research roadmaps of the Flagships.

2. Frequently Asked Questions on Partnering Projects (PPs)

Q1. Member States have an important role to play in funding Partnering Projects. How is this taking place?

In an ERANET action funded by the Commission (EC), Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC)³ are defining, planning and coordinating their support to the Flagships. This action, called FLAG-ERA (<http://www.flagera.eu/>), currently brings together 37 funding agencies from 26 MS and AC. It is open for additional funding agencies to join.

MS and AC first and foremost support the Flagships through their national and regional research programmes by funding projects that eventually become PPs. They may for instance launch specific/dedicated national/regional calls addressing the research agendas of the Flagships or just mention the Flagships in their regular calls.

The second means of support will come from Joint Transnational Calls organised by those countries willing to fund together a joint research call in the areas of the Flagships. FLAG-ERA has launched a first call for transnational projects closed on 27th January 2015⁴. It is expected that, in the years to come, additional transnational calls will be regularly launched (possibly every 2 years). Successful projects from such calls are expected to become PPs of the two Flagships.

Q2. What are the incentives and benefits to become a Partnering Project?

Researchers in PPs benefit from outstanding scientific collaborations with a large number of leading academic and industrial research teams in Europe.

PPs gain preferred access to e.g. ICT research infrastructures (such as computing, design and manufacturing equipment, testing facilities, etc.), tools and services, and more broadly to invaluable knowledge and information through their participation in meetings and workshops organised by the Core Project (CP).

PPs can also benefit from their participation in international cooperation activities that the Flagships are organising and from the visibility and credibility of the Flagship when talking to external parties.

PP partners enjoy the same benefits and rights as the CP partners except for those that involve exchange or exploitation of confidential or proprietary information or results (i.e. access rights to foreground and background). An overview of such benefits will be provided in the **partnering documents** of the Flagships in the respective project web sites.

PPs play an essential role in the implementation of the Flagship's research roadmap, and will

³ The latest information on which countries are associated or in the process of association to Horizon 2020 can be found in the online manual http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/international-cooperation_en.htm.

⁴ See <http://www.flagera.eu/FLAG-ERA-call-2015>.

also be able to influence its evolution. The roadmap is a living document to ensure that maximum possible benefits are drawn from new ideas and S&T progress, as these emerge both inside and outside the Flagship. The CP and PP partners will review the roadmap and update it, if needed, at least every two years.

Finally, PPs will be represented in the management of the CP and in the governance of the whole Flagship (see Q8 below).

Q3. Is the establishment of a Partnering Project the only possibility for collaborating with a Flagship?

No, PPs is not the only form of possible collaboration. There may be cases where other forms of collaboration would be preferred by the interested parties. In fact, it is at the discretion of each Flagship and its partners to establish transparently such other forms of collaboration.

Q4. How can my project become a Partnering Project?

If a project can contribute to the Flagship objectives and wishes to collaborate with partners in the CP, it submits, at any time, an application to the CP to become a PP. There are two eligibility requirements for a project to become a PP:

- the project must have already its own funding;
- the project needs to demonstrate that it can significantly contribute to the Flagship's objectives.

Applications for PPs are assessed by the CP following an open, transparent and fair process. The application and the selection procedures of PPs are described in the partnering documents of the two Flagships (see links in Q2). The MS/AC and the EC will monitor the outcome of the PP selection process.

Q5: What type of project can apply to become a Partnering Project?

There is not one specific type of PPs. For example, PPs may:

- involve one or more entities (e.g., public or private organisations, etc.), i.e., they may be *multi-partner collaborative projects* or *single-partner / single-investigator* projects;
- get their funding from regional or national funding agencies, from the EC or from other sources (e.g. private industry, donors, etc.);
- include partners that are already members of the CP Consortium.

Q6. What kind of contribution is expected from Partnering Projects?

The contribution from PPs may take many forms. PPs may for instance address specific science and technology areas of the Flagship's research roadmap; focus on technology transfer activities; contribute as early users or become early adopters of the Flagships technologies, etc. This list is not exhaustive and will flexibly evolve according to the specific needs of the Flagships.

Both Flagships will proceed to a first identification of which tasks could be better suited for the PPs. This information will be regularly updated and should help projects decide whether to apply.

Q7. How is the association between a Partnering Project and the Core Project formalised?

Agreements can only be signed between legal entities. The PPs will, in a first place, be implemented by giving the status of *Associate Members* to the partners of the PPs (see links in Q2).

Q8. What defines the terms of collaboration between a Partnering Project and the Core Project?

The standard modalities of collaboration between the CP and a PP are described in the partnering documents of the two Flagships mentioned in Q2 above.

When the collaboration requires the participation in confidential activities (for example activities linked to technology development or innovation), an additional ad-hoc cooperation agreement may need to be signed between the PP (more precisely the related Associated Members) and the relevant CP partners (a subset of the CP consortium) setting out the rights and responsibilities that come with this collaboration.

Once such agreement is signed, the members of the PP become associated to the relevant work package(s) and task(s) of the CP. They work together with the CP partners to address the objectives of that WP or task and participate to the various project meetings or events.

Q9. What are the reporting obligations for Partnering Projects towards the Core Project?

In principle, PPs have no formal reporting obligation towards the CP. They need only to follow their reporting obligations towards the funding bodies providing their financial support.

However, some light reporting may be necessary to describe the contribution of a PP to the Flagship roadmap and to inform the EC and the relevant national/regional funding bodies about the level of integration and interworking of the PPs with the CP.

Q10. How do Partnering Projects participate in the governance of the Flagship?

First, representatives of the PPs will be integrated into the management structure of the CP.

Second, a Flagship Governance Forum (FGF), linking the EC, the MS/AC and the CP and PP representatives of the Flagships will be created in 2015. The FGF aims at achieving an efficient inter-working of the main stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Flagships. For more information on the FGF and its activities, see [the EC's staff working document on FET Flagships](#), section 4.4 – pages 12-14.

Q11. The Partnering Projects will need to get organised, in order to best participate to the activities of the Flagships. Will there be any support for that?

In 2016, the EC may fund an action which will provide resources to support the PPs e.g. in participating to project meetings, workshops or other relevant activities that each of the two Flagships will be organising and in networking and coordinating their activities⁵.

Q12. Could there be Partnering Projects from outside Europe?

The terms of collaboration between the CP and PPs defined in the implementation model of the Flagships do not apply to projects/partners from outside Europe (i.e. outside the MS and AC).

International cooperation is essential for both Flagships as they are addressing global challenges. Partners outside Europe wishing to cooperate with a Flagship should explore collaboration possibilities by getting directly in contact with the Flagship – contact details can be found in the web sites of the Flagships.

For more information on the Flagships and their Model:

- (1) What are the FET Flagships: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/fet-flagships>
- (2) The Flagship model and governance structure: Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2014) 283, <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/fet-flagships-novel-partnering-approach-address-grand-scientific-challenges-boost-innovation>.
- (3) The Graphene Flagship: <http://www.graphene-flagship.eu/> and the Human Brain Project (HBP) Flagship: <https://www.humanbrainproject.eu/>

⁵ An action in the form of a Coordination and Support Action was included by the EC in its proposal for the H2020 work programme 2016-2017 that is now under discussion with the delegates of the relevant H2020 Programme Committee.