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Research in Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities: towards a New Approach (2010-13)

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SSH contributing to developing the European Research Area

“Ljubljana Process”

- “ Europe now needs to develop a common vision and effective governance of the European Research Area”
- **Grand societal challenges:** “Citizens benefiting from the contribution of *large-scale* R&D efforts to solve major societal challenges”

ERA Process and SSH Programme

- **Leverage effect** for more structured actions in the field of SSH (ERA-NETs, large-scale projects ...)
- **Feeding better policy making with research results** (more integrated actions: *Ex ante*: taking stock of previous research, capitalisation, *Ex post* : dissemination)
- **Joint Programming** : involves MS engaging voluntarily and on a variable geometry basis in the definition, development and implementation of common strategic research agendas based on a common vision on how to address major societal challenges.



SSH : we are a big community in the FP

- Today we have more than 250 projects running in which more than 1000 organisations (Universities and Public Research Organisations) and 4500 participants from over 70 countries are involved
- This creates a major networked community in social sciences and humanities in Europe



Why a new approach in SSH (I)

- Need to create a solid knowledge-base on which Europe-wide, comparative, interdisciplinary research would flourish
- Need to avoid fragmentation
- Need to forge a clear programme identity firmly focused on a policy-driven orientation for Europe



Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in FP7

**ERC - 'Ideas' Programme:
Five SSH Panels**

**'Cooperation' Programme:
• *Theme 8: SSH***



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'Cooperation' Sp. Programme Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH)

- European Research Council (ERC) : bottom up, frontier research. Individual grants, disciplines oriented, excellence : EUR 1 billion (2007-2013)
- Cooperation programme : societal challenges oriented, policy relevance. Collaborative research, excellence, pluri-disciplinarity : EUR 623 million (2007-2013)



Why a new approach in SSH (II)

- Structuring the European Research Area by:
 - better linking disciplines together
 - better feeding policymaking
- Need for critical mass / better added value for the EU
- Visibility of EU supported research efforts
- Coherent and complementary research activities
- Gains for management efficiency
- Preparing the path for the Next Framework Programme



An approach building on **Societal Challenges for the EU**

- Identification of important Societal Challenges for the EU
- Each of the Challenges addressed by a specific Set of Research actions (*Funding Scheme: Large Scale Integrating Research Project*) (4-5 years duration)



Future SSH large scale research projects:

- Address a societal challenge
- Take stock of **past related research** in this field
- Multi-annual research actions addressing the different dimensions of this challenge, **foresight/forward looking dimension** and **dissemination**
- Contribute to support EU policies, the European Research Area in SSH and its international dimension
- Funding Scheme: Collaborative projects (large scale integrating projects) with minimum EC contribution of EUR 6 500 000



Who defines the Challenges

- Grand Societal Challenges are defined by the Commission services in charge of the Annual Work Programmes take into account:
 - The Policies and the Agenda of the EU
 - The views of the SSH Expert Advisory Group
 - Discussions with the Programme Committee





Large Scale Integrating Projects – How to

- Use of well-known funding scheme (large-scale integrating collaborative projects)
 - No Networks of Excellence
- Transition from present set-up will be gradual
- More bottom-up approach allowing scientific community more flexibility





SSH New Approach – What is it for the scientific community ?

- Ambitious objectives
- Europe wide comparative studies
- More meaningful results at European level
- New macro trends and phenomena to identify
- More inter-disciplinarity and linkages – interactions between disciplines





Towards a more professional project management

- New approach calls for improved management:
 - Well defined management structure
 - Well defined governance structure, strong and effective leadership
 - Efficient, well coordinated research teams
 - Enhanced rationalisation: well defined objectives, milestones and timescales
 - Improved use of resources
 - Efficient and systematic monitoring, Improved time management



A more balanced approach to quality deliverables

- Except the normally required reporting we would need a smaller number of deliverables over time:
 - Fewer scientific reports per work package
 - Reports that are meant for publication in quality journals and good publishing houses
 - An excellent and updated frequently website
 - Regular “Policy Briefs”



Large projects can deliver

- An example from FP6, led by a small country (NOR)
 - RECON – Reconstituting Democracy in Europe (Integrated project)
 - 22 partners
 - €5 M
 - Excellent annual review + set of published deliverables



Impact on the structure of future SSH Work Programmes

- Continuity and Change on a backdrop of a growing budget (2010-2013)
- Impact and place of Large Scale Integrating Projects growing over time
- Continued presence of “conventional” topics corresponding to important focused dimensions of the Societal Challenges
- Continued presence of Specific International Cooperation Actions (SICA) and Coordination and Support Actions (CA)
- Each block of funding schemes put under distinct Calls for proposals with separate budgets, for clarity





Expected Outcome

- Enhanced excellence in SSH research
- Increase of knowledge according to the EU major challenges (remit of the SSH Programme in FP7)
- Scientific evidence for policy-making, in particular ERA and other EU policies
- Development of input for infrastructures: databases, indicators, modelling frameworks
- Partnerships, involvement of stakeholders



An Information Plan for the scientific community

- The Commission services:
 - Will publish an information leaflet explaining and outlining the New Approach
 - Will produce FAQs that will be hosted on CORDIS and EUROPA SSH relevant websites
 - Will be ready to participate in a limited number of national events organised by National Contact Points to explain the New Approach





Stay tuned !

- Our new website is full of pertinent information:
- http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index_en.html





Societal Challenge: Example in Activity 2

Transition towards a new social, economic and territorial model

The Challenge

- How to face the expected population growth (30% by 2050)?
- How to face the doubling of world energy consumption and CO₂ emissions by 2050?
- How will change the relationship between regions of the world, regional development and specialisation

Why it matters for Europe?

- EU leadership in the SD field
- A radical evolution in EU society lifestyles and land use is needed
- Adequate policies and measures have to take place



Societal Challenge: Example in Activity 2

Transition towards a new social, economic and territorial model

Addressing the Challenge

Research should take into consideration:

- Scientific reviews and research mapping exercises
- Identification of new behavioural patterns – consumption habits, mobility, energy services – in a long term perspective
- Systemic integration of various economic, social, cultural and technological components
- Development of new concepts, new tools, new databases, new indicators
- Forward-looking activities into possible and desirable scenarios
- Cost benefit analysis of policies to be implemented



Societal Challenges Other examples

- Adapting evolving educational systems to societal transformation
- Changing the role of the financial system to better serve economic, social and environmental objectives
- Europe facing a rising multipolar world
- Unity in linguistic diversity: a challenge for Europe

