Water Joint Programming Initiative Submission

Comments on the Public Consultation on Articles 185

Date: 07/04/2017

***Note**: This contribution can be published as the Water JPI Submission.*

Introduction

Since its approval by the European Council of Competitiveness in December 2011, the Water Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) covers a wide range of water challenges, focusing on ecosystems, citizens, economic sectors (including the bio-economy) and closing the water cycle gap for a more efficient water resources management while bridging demands and supplies. This document has been produced by Research and Innovation Funding Programmes representing 88% of the European National Public investments in these topics. This wide representation of programmes and topics leads to priority setting in different thematic areas in relation with Water challenges from local to global scales.

This short submission has been prepared in relation to the EC Public Consultation on Article 185. This submission builds on the consultation for the preliminary impact assessment of PRIMA (Water JPI Coordinator interviewed by expert group). The questionnaire provided for this consultation on Article 185 was not always applicable to the Water JPI as a network of Research, Development & Initiative (RDI) funders. Where possible and relevant, answers to the Public Consultation questions are provided below.

General Comments

The Water JPI is of the opinion, that there is a:

- ⇒ Need for complimentary actions planned in cooperation with the Water JPI, in relation with the Strategic Research & Innovation Agendas; Article 185s are targeting regional challenges for some or focused thematic issues for others while the JPIs are tackling the defined societal challenge in its globality in a coordinated and integrated way. One of the key JPI's objectives is to progress alignment of national/regional research programmes – going beyond Research & Innovation Agenda setting and Joint Calls.
- ⇒ Risk of competing for funds at EC-level (i.e. Societal Challenges 5 and 2 contributions to PRIMA);
- ⇒ Risk of competing for funds at National-level in some countries (funds which could be dedicated to JPIs);
- ⇒ Risk of not transferring existing or new knowledge with the EU and associated partners, depending on the legal provisions for operating RDI actions.

In addition, it is important to note that some of the answers provided in this questionnaire could also be applicable to the Joint Programming Initiatives. It also felt that some of the questions are too generic, when considering that each of the Articles 185 has its own specificity in terms of types of research funded.

Specific Questions

Question 5

The Water JPI has received/is receiving support from Horizon 2020 (ERAnet COFUND Actions & Coordination Support Action).

Question 7

7. EU Added value

How would you assess the following statements about Art.185 initiatives?

between 8 and 8 answered rows

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Fund high quality R&I projects which cannot be realized at national level alone	●	○	○	○	○
Provide knowledge gains with respect to programme development and implementation	○	●	○	○	○
Increase competitiveness and contribute to economic growth	○	●	○	○	○
Produce higher impact from national R&I investments when embedded in transnational programme	●	○	○	○	○
Allow national R&I capacity building as well as access to foreign knowledge	○	●	○	○	○
Raise the attractiveness for foreign researchers to work in your country	○	○	○	○	●
Provide additional financial resources for national R&I from EU cofunding	●	○	○	○	○
Raise political visibility for joint programmes at national and European level	●	○	○	○	○

Question 8

between 15 and 15 answered rows

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Build a society and an economy based on knowledge and innovation		●			
Implement the "Europe 2020" strategy, the EU's strategy for jobs and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth		●			
Develop and implementing EU policies		●			
Support the development of the European Research Area, a unified area open to the world, in which scientific knowledge, technology and researchers circulate freely					●
Foster excellent science	●				
Boost industrial leadership			●		
Improve the lifelong health and well-being of all					●
Secure sufficient supplies of safe, healthy and high quality food and other bio-based products					●
Make the transition to a reliable, affordable, publicly accepted, sustainable and competitive energy system					●

Achieve a European transport system that is resource-efficient, climate- and environmentally-friendly, safe and seamless for the benefit of all citizens, the economy and society	○	○	○	○	●
Achieve a resource- and water-efficient and climate change resilient economy and society, protection and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems and a sustainable supply and use of raw materials	○	○	○	○	●
Foster a greater understanding of Europe, providing solutions and supporting inclusive, innovative and reflective European societies	○	○	●	○	○
Foster secure European societies in a context of Unprecedented transformations and growing global interdependencies and threats, while strengthening the European culture of freedom and justice	○	○	○	○	●
Spread excellence and widening participation	○	●	○	○	○
Support science with and for society	○	●	○	○	○

Question 9

9. Coherence

How would you assess the following statements about Art.185 initiatives?

between 4 and 4 answered rows

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Are complementary to / and well coherent with other Horizon 2020 Public to Public Partnership initiatives with similar objectives (i. e. ERA-NET Cofund, Joint Programming Initiatives, EJP Cofund, etc.)	○	○	●	○	○
Are in line with Horizon 2020 policy objectives	○	●	○	○	○
Are in line with broader EU policy objectives, beyond Horizon 2020 policy objectives	●	○	○	○	○
Are mainly oriented towards national policy objectives	○	●	○	○	○

Question 10

10. Effectiveness

How would you assess the following statements about Art.185 initiatives and projects stemming from them?

between 7 and 7 answered rows

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Contribute to scientific integration	●	○	○	○	○
Contribute to managerial integration	●	○	○	○	○
Contribute to financial integration	●	○	○	○	○
Allow for easier cross-country cooperation than national programmes	○	●	○	○	○
Allow for easier cross-country cooperation than Horizon 2020 programmes	○	●	○	○	○
Allow for projects that could not be realised within national programmes	○	●	○	○	○
Allow for projects that could not be realised under Horizon 2020	○	○	○	○	●

Question 11

It should be noted that the situation is different between the existing Articles 185 and “future” Articles 185. The administrative burden is increasing for the national governments and for the researchers for the latter.

11. Efficiency

How would you assess the following statements about Art.185 initiatives?

between 5 and 5 answered rows

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Provide an appropriate level of administrative burden for Participating States					
Are straightforward and simple in their preparation					
Are straightforward and simple in their implementation					
Are less burdensome for applicants than national projects					
Are less burdensome for applicants than Horizon 2020 projects					

Question 12

To the specific question: *More human resources are available for the setup of an Art.185 framework*, the Water JPI's position is that this would depend of the Article 185 considered. Efficiency would be increased if the EC was centralising their administration. In addition while more budget is available, it appears to be competing with the budget allocated to already existing initiatives.

12. Future recommendations

Do you think that Art.185 initiatives performance can be improved in the future?

between 8 and 8 answered rows

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
Legal and administrative burdens at national level are removed			●		
More human resources are available for the set-up of an Art.185 framework		●			
More national budgets for Art.185 initiatives are available		●			
More human resources are available for efficient / effective implementation of Art.185 initiatives	●				
A better coordination between national stakeholders is ensured		●			
Are better embedded in the EU Framework Programme	●				
The multiplicity of instruments is reduced	●				
More harmonisation of funding rules including reporting is achieved		●			

Sections C to E

The Water JPI as a network of Member States is unable to reply to the specific questions relating to Sections C to E. Some general remarks include:

- ⇒ To the questions: *Is there sufficient budget contributions from Participating States to achieve the objectives of the Art. 185 Programme?, t*his is only the case for some countries and depends on how initiatives and Horizon 2020 are complimenting each other.
- ⇒ Are Articles 185 really necessary when the countries involved are already part in another EU initiatives/programmes?
- ⇒ Articles 185 are regional but knowledge produced would be relevant to the rest of EU. There is therefore a risk that this knowledge is not transferred to the rest of EU.
- ⇒ In term of Added Value, Articles 185 could facilitate the access to Research Infrastructure in other non-EU countries. However, there is a need to avoid the multiplication (and risk of duplication) of infrastructure (as developed under other already existing initiatives).
- ⇒ In relation to the Integration of the Preparation Phase of the Article: There is a longer time to reach the actual research stage (from the identification of the need to launching the action and starting its concrete realisation).
- ⇒ Articles 185 would benefit from less complexity and more flexibility for managing the related activities. Articles 185 do not provide the flexibility to cater for emerging priorities.
- ⇒ In the Articles 185, the concept of variable geometry is not applicable. While the introduction of Real Common Pot is seen as positive, this may result in competition in budget allocation at national levels, in additional costs (transfer of funds between countries beyond EU).

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