



Evaluation of the impact of the Framework Programme on the formation of the ERA in Social Sciences and the Humanities (SSH)

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**Evaluation of the impact
of the Framework Programme
on the formation of the ERA
in Social Sciences and
the Humanities
(SSH)**

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Glossary of terms

CA	Coordination Action
ERA	European Research Area
ESFRI	European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures
FP	Framework Programme
DG RTD	Directorate-General for Research
IP	Integrated Project
NoE	Network of Excellence
RTD	Research and Technology Development
SSH	Social Science and Humanities
STREP	Specific Targeted Research Project
SSA	Specific Support Action

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation Partnership (TEP) was commissioned by the Directorate-General for Research (DG RTD) to undertake this evaluation on the impact of the Framework Programme on the formation of the European Research Area (ERA) in Social Sciences and the Humanities (SSH)

The evaluation was carried out between December 2008 and February 2010, and relies on evidence collected, analysed and judged from the following sources:

- a comprehensive review and analysis of documentation related to the development of Social Sciences and Humanities under FP5 (3rd call) and FP6;
- an inventory of data sets and other forms of research that had been developed by SSH-related projects in the context of Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence under FP6;
- a detailed mapping exercise of projects receiving support from the European Commission under the 3rd call of FP5 and the whole of FP6 to illustrate the structure of relationships established between countries participating in European research projects in SSH and to evaluate the strength of these relationships between countries;
- an online survey targeted at a sample of 100 policy makers representing each EU Member State and a number of Associate States;
- 12 face-to-face interviews with desk officers in DG RTD responsible for administering European funding for research supported under FP5 and FP6 in SSH;
- an online survey targeted at coordinators and work-package leaders responsible for FP6 Integrated Projects (IPs) and Networks of Excellence (NoEs) to which a statistically significant number responded;
- 17 telephone interviews with coordinators and work-package leaders responsible for FP6 Integrated Projects (IPs) and Networks of Excellence (NoEs);
- 6 focus group discussions with researchers to explore topics related to researcher careers and other cross cutting issues;
- interviews with 25 researchers of different nationalities engaged in projects under FP5 and FP6 to investigate further questions on the impact on researcher careers;
- a series of interviews with policy makers in all 27 EU Member States to gain a complete picture of SSH across the EU.

The principal conclusions stemming from these assessments follow:

1.2 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the study was to evaluate the contribution of the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) parts of the Framework Programme on the European Research Area in SSH. The first Communication on the European Research Area (COM/2000/6) had a considerable influence on EU research programmes in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). At the end of the 5th Framework Programme (FP), the 3rd call of the Socio-economic Research Key Action included two themes which were clearly influenced by the ERA discussion: Theme 4 - The development of European infrastructures for comparative research in the social sciences and humanities; and Theme 5 - Support activities to stimulate the development of social sciences and humanities in the European Research Area. In FP6 such objectives were incorporated into "Priority 7 on Citizens and Governance in the Knowledge Based Society", and especially in its use of Networks of Excellence (NoEs) and Integrated Projects (IPs) which aimed at structuring the research scene.

In order to evaluate the contributions to the European Research Area, the study looked into impacts on four domains: the research policies for SSH in Member States, the structuring effects of the new instruments; the importance of the support for research infrastructures in the context of the SSH programme; and the impact of the programme on the careers of participating researchers.

To derive policy lessons from the findings of the study in each of these areas, this summary juxtaposes the findings with the programme's objectives. The following presents the ERA objectives of the SSH programmes in FP5 & 6, summarises the subsequent findings of this evaluation, and provides lessons for the European Commission.

1) Research policy making in the field of social sciences and humanities

Objectives:

Coordination of research policies was a key objective for the ERA, and the SSH programme developed activities to pursue this objective:

- a) It set the objective for its large scale projects to link the European efforts with national programmes;
- b) It supported indirectly the coordination of national policies for SSH through close follow up of ERA-NET formation in SSH, activities of the European Science and Foundation and the workings of ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures) in SSH.

Findings:

- a) National SSH research policy is driven mainly by domestic agendas.
- b) The FP SSH programmes have had a limited impact on national programmes in Member States. There is some alignment of research areas between national programmes in some countries and the Framework Programme, but this is not a generalised phenomenon and it is not always evident who adapts to whom.
- c) The SSH programme made some contribution to the programme management practices of some member states, although other forums such as ERANETs and ESFRI have been more significant in this respect.
- d) SSH FP research results may be increasingly contributing to the scientific knowledge base for specific policy areas at the national level. The programme has encouraged more involvement of researchers with policy-makers and in some countries participation in FP projects increases the prestige and credibility of researchers.
- e) Despite national differences in SSH research strategies and funding, international mobility of researchers as well as pan-European research cooperation in SSH is seen as increasingly important at national level. Member States have taken action to facilitate SSH research collaboration and researcher exchanges.

Lessons:

- a) National research policy practices vary greatly in SSH. It is important to valorise the variety and seek to promote good practices in the European Research Area.
- b) The different instruments of European Policy have different impacts on different countries. It is important to ensure coherence between the different instruments. It is also important to ensure an open environment for different national responses to be discussed and evaluated.

- c) The Commission may want to promote and further encourage the combination of SSH funding through ERA-NET schemes and the SSH thematic programmes. This two pronged approach might well prove an effective way in which to engage policy makers and the SSH research community.

2) The structuring effects of the large instruments

Objectives:

The large instruments (NoEs and IPs) were at the forefront of the Commission's attempt to structure the research scene in the ERA. The work programmes of the SSH programme demanded that projects using these instruments among other things should:

- a) Improve the state-of-the-art and make demonstrable progress towards comparative research in terms of methodology, data and significant coverage at European scale;
- b) Achieve real and meaningful co-operation within and between disciplines to the degree required by the issues being addressed;
- c) Develop common and/or shared research infrastructures, methodologies, indicators, statistics, databases etc.

Findings:

- a) The large instruments, introduced under the 6th FP, have improved the state-of-the-art in SSH research. They have contributed to increased possibilities for comparative research, collaboration, EU data collection and dissemination, as well as to the development of common approaches and methodologies in SSH research. However, the large instruments have brought with them an increased amount of project management and administration which has been challenging for coordinators and research institutions.
- b) The large instruments have greatly contributed to the creation of a community of European researchers in SSH, often stemming from different research disciplines. Their involvement in the programme has led to the use of a common vocabulary and methods. This has resulted in a change of researchers' understanding of the need for European comparative research in SSH.
- c) The large projects tend to have a research culture that seems less hierarchical than in many national contexts. This is mainly due to the different cultures within the research teams. The large projects also support the growth of active and mutually productive relationships between senior, mid and early career researchers.
- d) The large instruments have played a role in developing European data-sets, shared research methodologies, indicators and statistics. However, the most important infrastructures that these projects built were associated with the functioning of the collaboration between large numbers of researchers and with the dissemination of their outputs and the visibility of their work.
- e) The large projects are based on existing nuclei of relationships but they tend to extend to new partners. Investment in infrastructure as well as longer-term cooperation links seem to make these projects more durable alliances than the smaller projects. However, in the end most of these relationships will dissolve in the absence of Commission funding.

- f) While the large instruments increase the number of opportunities for early career researchers and those with less previous exposure to international research environments for publishing their work and acquiring grant application and project management skills, from time to time there may be a tendency to accommodate less scientifically 'excellent' work within collective outputs.
- g) Although European network formation processes require coordinators to carefully select what they believe to be strategic partnerships to satisfy the Commission's selection panels, the pressure on projects to reach out to new partners is having an effect in terms of building the European research community, including partners from new and less research intense Member States (such as Slovenia, Poland and Portugal for example).

Lessons:

- a) The large instruments have provided important benefits for the creation of the ERA and should be continued in the future, with care to ensure that those, that are important and well-functioning, find funding space to continue their valuable work.
- b) The Commission may wish to better define the infrastructure component of the large instruments and consider the implications of longer-term support of such infrastructures after projects come to an end. The Commission should also find ways in which the infrastructures created under the large instruments could find their place in the overall infrastructures policy of the EU.
- c) The Commission may want to strengthen its efforts to support the diffusion of good project management techniques and to support research organisations in dealing with the project management overheads associated with the projects funded under the large instruments.

3) Research infrastructures for social sciences and humanities (including large comparative data sets; tools et al)

Objectives:

Research Infrastructures in the SSH play a very important structuring role for the research community. This is why from the very beginning of the ERA, the SSH programme explicitly launched projects to support the development of infrastructures for comparative research. In FP6 research infrastructures became linked with the structuring effects of the large instruments and the visibility and usefulness of these instruments in the broader research community. A key objective in relation to research infrastructures has been to make available to the research community high quality data for comparative research, and to support the development of relevant tools and methods.

Findings:

- a) Research infrastructures in SSH concern mostly the provision of (often comparative) data or access to data. Depending on the scope one gives to the word "data", the range of activities that could be seen as infrastructures can change dramatically.
- b) The programme supported important data related research infrastructures through dedicated projects. Projects have supported four of the five infrastructures of the ESFRI roadmap in SSH. Of these the European Social Survey stands out not only for its quality and usefulness but also for the critical role the SSH programme has played in its full existence. The programme also supported other important data related infrastructures projects that have not been yet included in the ESFRI roadmap.

- c) Within projects data are often seen as "intermediary inputs" in the production of knowledge rather than as deliverables in themselves. However, amongst the large projects there was some attention put on preparing data sets for use by other people (within and outside the consortium) and some of those data sets have become available (although little is known about how and where they were used).
- d) However, in more than half of the large projects systems were organized to share large amounts of data, and to make source material accessible not only to the researchers in the project but also to the rest of the research community and broader society. These infrastructures play the role of information hubs around which communities of researchers can structure future research directions and develop future projects.

Lessons:

- a) The dedicated research infrastructures calls of the SSH programme have produced important projects which made substantial inroads to the deliberations of ESFRI. A closer link between the programme and ESFRI work can promote further promising projects to become important European infrastructures.
- b) While ESFRI deal with the long-term funding options of research infrastructures and potentially with the provision of systems of research infrastructures for European science, potential interactions between the infrastructures of the ESFRI roadmap and the large scale projects provide an important area for SSH policy development.
- c) The Commission may want to further encourage projects that would facilitate external access to data-sets and infrastructures thereby enabling researchers to pursue subsequent research work. This could be done through specifically designed calls for proposals that define and exemplify the contribution that the archived data can make and explore ways in which such data can be maintained and accessed.

4) The careers of researchers and how they may be affected by participation in different project types

Objectives:

The structuring of the research system in Europe needs to be accompanied by the provision of scientific career paths that correspond to the new structures. The SSH programmes have encouraged the large projects to contribute to the development of training programmes, in particular for young scientists, whilst aiming to mobilise SSH research communities towards particular directions.

Findings:

- a) The participation in SSH programmes has improved the learning and training environments of researchers with a new, more participatory research culture and learning environment. This has had an impact upon early career researchers and their career opportunities in particular.
- b) Mid-career researchers have less incentives than junior researchers to engage with EU FP SSH projects and have fewer benefits from these projects in terms of career advancement. FP projects have limited impact on senior researcher careers.
- c) Participation in the SSH programmes offers researchers important opportunities for access to senior researchers, building of networks, publishing and attend conferences.

While these opportunities are important for the career of junior researchers, the mobility requirements are often challenging for people with family commitments.

- d) Positions in the FP are generally associated with precarious employment and fixed-term work. This is a particular challenge in areas of research and countries where stable positions are in short supply.
- e) Inter-institutional mobility building on EU research in social sciences was not encountered in the study.

Lessons:

- a) For meaningful international relationships and networks to become more sustainable, the European Commission should consider the various needs of researchers at different stages in their career in terms of mobility.
- b) The implementation of the Charter and Code in Member States should have an effect on improving career structures and the quality of their employment positions at the national level.
- c) The Commission may wish to promote support for comparative interdisciplinary research by national authorities and in the context of institutional considerations concerning research in Europe. Raising the visibility of such research would contribute to establishing more stable and appropriate careers for the researchers trained in EU projects.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is the Final Report on the evaluation of the impact of the Framework Programme on the formation of the European Research Area (ERA) in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (SSH) for the Directorate-General for Research (DG RTD), European Commission.

The report consists of the following three main sections:

- **Section 3.0** outlines the background, rationale and objective of the evaluation, and describes the methodology used.
- **Section 4.0** presents the key results of the evaluation and answers the evaluation questions.

The Annexes contain the detailed findings of the different evaluation tools used.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 CONTEXT

3.1.1 Introduction

The role and potential that the social sciences and humanities can play in the development of the European Union as a whole has developed significantly over the past 50 years. On the one hand, European competency has extended further and further into the social sphere to effectively touch on all aspects of domestic social policy. On the other hand, the European Union (in common with Member States) has increasingly recognised the importance of understanding whole dimensions of 'policy' in more holistic terms; policy incursions in the area of science or economic policy generate important social consequences. The promotion of health and well-being demand attention not only from the perspective of the development of medical interventions, but also it is essential to have a clear understanding of the social context and interplay of factors generating health outcomes. The phenomenon of 'diabesity' is a case in point illustrating the ways in which social science intelligence can complement medical expertise in the challenges that face European societies. Work in the environmental field is another.

Social science and humanities expertise is also of growing importance in response to the drive for 'evidence-based' policy-making and policy evaluation reflecting both the attention to relevance and 'impact' and also to accountability of public resources. The pressure to develop indicators, benchmarks and impact assessments places significant demands on capacity in the social sciences and humanities.

The development of social science capacity in the European Research Area (ERA) reflects the growing recognition of the contribution that social science can play to the challenges facing the European Union both in its own right and in an inter-disciplinary, inter-sectoral context. It also reflects the realisation that European research in the SSH is qualitatively different from national research, and that international comparisons provide for qualitative leaps in understandings of national phenomena.

3.1.2 The Development of the European Research Area

The idea of a European Research Area grew out of the realisation that research in Europe suffers from three weaknesses: insufficient funding, lack of an environment to stimulate research and exploit results, and the fragmented nature of activities and the dispersal of resources. In 2000, the EU decided to create the European Research Area. The objective of this initiative combined three related and complementary concepts: the creation of an "internal market" in research, the restructuring of the European research fabric by improving the coordination of national research activities and policies, and the development of a European research policy capable of addressing the funding of research activities while taking account of all relevant aspects of other EU and national policies.

ERA has become a central pillar of the EU "Lisbon Strategy" for growth and jobs, together with the completion of the Single Market, the European "broad-based innovation strategy" and the creation of a European Higher Education Area. Many initiatives have been taken by the EU and Member States. But there are still strong national and institutional barriers which prevent ERA from becoming a reality. For this reason, The European Commission has published a Green Paper "The European Research Area: New Perspectives"¹ and launched a broad

¹ Green Paper: "The European Research Area: New Perspectives", SEC(2007) 412, 4.4.2007

institutional and public debate on possible actions to give renewed impetus to the realisation of an open, competitive and attractive European Research Area, which would meet the needs and expectations of the scientific community, business and citizens.

Above all, ERA is the backbone of the '5th freedom', covering free movement for researchers, and the free circulation of knowledge, including access to data and availability of open access publications. The aim of ERA is to ensure a coherent and integrated strategy capable of providing European researchers with relevant and effective resources to accomplish the '5th freedom'. The issues of globalisation, geopolitical challenges, economic performance, health and ageing, cultures and citizenship clearly are domains where Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) can provide support and translate into critical mass capable of producing added value research results.

3.1.3 SSH EU Research Programmes in the ERA Context

The different SSH EU research programmes have focussed on the principal challenges that our societies face. SSH research programmes represent a dynamic framework that invite research teams from different countries to unite their efforts to analyse and tackle these problems.

The SSH research programme reacted quickly to the ERA communication (COM(2000) 6), shaping its last call of FP5 to incorporate ERA dimensions, such as the support to European infrastructures for comparative research and a series of measures to prepare the research community to better respond to the drive for larger scale funding instruments and the structuring and integration of research capacities that characterised the ERA.

Building on this, in FP6, in the context of the Priority 7 "Citizens and governance in a knowledge based society" of the programme "Integrating and Strengthening the European Research Area", a number of ERA conditions were specified for projects to fulfil, and these were seen as especially important for large scale projects using the instruments of Networks of Excellence and Integrated Projects. These conditions related broadly to the achievement of a critical mass of research in particular areas, the development of infrastructures that would support the integration of research communities, the development of training and career paths, and the linking between European and national research efforts. These conditions form the background for this study.

Set in this context, this study is particularly timely and important, providing the opportunity for the European Commission to 'take stock' of its interventions in this area and develop the intelligence on which to base its future policy-making.

3.2 EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

In November 2008, DG Research commissioned this evaluation of the impact of the Framework Programme on the formation of the ERA in Social Sciences and the Humanities (SSH). The study aims at looking at the combination of structural and scientific objectives and the ways in which they have been implemented in the Socio-economic Key Action of FP5, and the Priority 7 – Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-based Society, of FP6. The evaluation considers the contributions of other programmes, in particular the ERA-NET scheme and the Infrastructures programme in FP6.

The main objective of this evaluation is to assess the structuring effects of the Framework Programme on the ERA in the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). In particular, the study will assess:

- The influence of European research policy after the ERA communication on national research policy-making in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities;

- The influence of the new instruments of FP6 on network formation, quality of relationships in Europe's Social Sciences and Humanities research community, and on the quality of European research;
- The influence of European research programmes in SSH on the creation of capacities for European research in SSH through infrastructures, training in comparative research, and impact on the careers of researchers.

The Terms of Reference specified a set of questions for the evaluation to answer. These are presented in the table below:

The evaluation will assess the structuring effects of the Framework Programme at four levels:

Research policy-making in the field of social sciences and humanities:

- To what extent different private and public social sciences and humanities research funding organizations in Europe have adjusted their strategies and practices in the light of the agendas developed and pursued at the Commission level?
- What are the factors that differentiate between national responses (e.g. research funding and performance structures, existence of research council type organizations, existence of important private players, size and importance of national effort in SSH etc.)?
- How have the activities of the thematic research programmes in SSH interacted with other community programmes involved in social sciences and humanities (e.g. ERA-NETs, infrastructures) in stimulating responses from national institutions?

The structuring effects of large instruments (particularly Networks of Excellence)

- Have the large projects (NoEs and IPs) delivered economies of scale in terms of structuring the relevant research communities in Europe?
- What kind of structures have been developed and how important have these been for research in the field concerned? (e.g. in terms of excellence, drawing talent into the field, achieving professional recognition etc.)
- How important have such projects been in terms of developing European infrastructures and training for the fields concerned? How (potentially) important are these infrastructures?

Research infrastructures for social sciences and humanities (including large comparative data-sets; tools)

- To what extent have the FP5 and FP6 research programmes in SSH contributed to the development of comparative research in Europe in terms of methodology, infrastructures and training?
- To what extent the projects supported by FP5 and FP6 under the broader heading "research infrastructures" have provided such infrastructures for European researchers outside the consortia?

- Are there potentially important tools / methods / infrastructures (e.g. comparative European data-sets) developed by projects other than those designated as "research infrastructures"?

The careers of researchers and how they may be affected by participation in different project types

- To what extent have the SSH programmes contributed to the career advancement of participating researchers, and how do those researchers assess the programme's contributions?
- How are the SSH programme's contributions to inter-institutional and international mobility evaluated by participating researchers?
- Are there any barriers to researchers' careers that could be addressed by the EU research programme's in the social sciences and humanities?

3.3 METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the evaluation questions outlined above, numerous sets of data both of a qualitative and quantitative nature were collected and analysed. The following section provides a summary of the different methodological tools employed.

3.3.1 *Familiarisation, Design and Structuring*

During the initial stages of the study, background information was reviewed and desk officers in DG Research responsible for administering European funding for research supported under FP5 and FP6 in the Social Sciences and Humanities were interviewed.

3.3.2 *Desk research analysis*

- Document review

As part of the desk research analysis, the evaluation team has undertaken a detailed literature review on the development of the Social Sciences and Humanities under FP5 (3rd call) and FP6 and looked at a variety of available documentation for the data collection. This included information available on CORDIS, as well as reports and other published material on SSH.

- Inventory of data sets and research infrastructures

An inventory of data sets and research infrastructures that had been developed in the context of Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence under FP6 was undertaken.

Data sets and infrastructures were identified through a review of research project proposals and technical annexes (few final reports were available) and a thorough assessment was made by the evaluation team, taking into account interviews with a sample of project coordinators and the Director of a national social science data archive.

- Mapping exercise

A detailed mapping of projects receiving support from the European Commission under the 3rd call of FP5 and the whole of FP6 was carried out. The objective of this exercise was to illustrate the structure of relationships established between countries participating in European research projects in the Social Sciences and Humanities and to evaluate the strength of these

relationships between countries weighted according to the average allocation of funds per partner per project. The source of data for the review was the project database detailing main contract details (title, instrument, partners, funding and so on), which was provided by DG RTD, but which is also publicly available on the CORDIS web site. The database contained 94 FP5 projects (third Call) and 158 FP6 projects.

3.3.3 Online surveys

- Online survey of coordinators and work-package leaders (FP5-FP6)

An online survey targeted at coordinators and work package leaders of projects under FP6 and the 3rd call of FP5 was conducted.

The survey was intended to give large-scale quantitative data on the disciplinary composition of the consortia, research project outcomes, perceptions of researcher outcomes, the incidence and significance of comparative research methodologies, training and researcher careers, the creation of comparative data-sets and linkages between projects and policymaking.

The survey generated responses from 465 researchers in total, including 115 responses relating to Integrated Projects and 84 responses relating to Networks of Excellence. The survey was sent out in two different stages. In a first stage, it was sent to all coordinators and work package leaders of SSH projects under FP6 and the 3rd call of FP5 (2231). This generated a total of 305 responses. In a second step, coordinators and work package leaders were asked to forward the survey link to participants of their projects to collect their views and opinions as well. This generated an additional 160 responses to the online survey.

- Online survey with national policy makers

An online survey targeted at a sample of 100 policy makers representing each EU Member State and a number of Associate States was undertaken. 34 policy makers replied to this request and provided the evaluation team with their perceptions and views on these issues. While the number of responses to the survey does not bear statistical significance, the findings serve as a complement to the interview programme with national policy makers as well as results stemming from specific questions in the other survey and extensive desk research. Evidence from these sources has assisted in ascertaining the extent to which the SSH FP has had any influence over policies at national level.

3.3.4 Consultations

- In-depth interviews with desk officers in DG Research:

Twelve face-to-face interviews were conducted with desk officers in DG Research responsible for administering European funding for research supported under FP5 and FP6 in the Social Science and Humanities.

The main aim of this exercise was to acquire further clarification to available paper and electronic evidence with regards to the programme and the projects it supported.

- Telephone Interviews with coordinators and work-package leaders

Seventeen telephone interviews with coordinators and work-package leaders responsible for projects funded as Integrated Projects or Networks of Excellence were undertaken as an initial investigation of the new instruments launched under FP6. Half of the interviews focussed on Integrated Projects and half on Networks of Excellence.

- Focus group discussions:

Six focus group discussions were held with researchers to explore topics related to researcher careers as well as other cross cutting issues at the heart of the study. A senior and junior group in each of the following countries were undertaken: Germany, Poland and Norway. Discussions were facilitated by focus group experts Ipsos MORI.

- Interviews with 25 researchers:

Interviews with 25 researchers of different nationalities engaged in projects under the 5th and 6th Framework Programmes were undertaken to investigate further questions on the impact on researcher careers. Given the focus of other areas of the study on interviews with coordinators, attempts were made here to identify mid-career researchers. This also aimed to compliment findings from the Focus Groups.

- Interviews with National Policymakers:

A series of interviews with policy makers in all 27 EU Member States were undertaken, with at least one representative per country and two or more representatives where necessary. The purpose of these interviews was to gain a complete picture of SSH across the European Union. As mentioned above the survey of national policy makers complemented this exercise.

3.3.5 Comparative Analysis – Case Studies

The evaluation team compiled five case study projects. Meetings and interviews were held with coordinators and those with first-hand knowledge of the projects to allow a more in-depth review to be carried out. This task enabled the evaluators to collect useful comparative data, identify emerging trends and best practices, and draw lessons that could be useful for awarding future projects.

3.3.6 Analysis and judgment

Finally, the evaluators processed and analysed all collected data and information, and considered the data collected to be sufficiently detailed to distil key findings through triangulations and to draw conclusions.

4.0 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The following section presents the main results of the evaluation. The results are presented in a way that directly answers the evaluation questions posed in the Terms of Reference.

More detailed summaries of the information and data (including quotes as well as detailed quantitative and qualitative data) collected through the different methodological tools can be found in the Annexes and Appendices, which constitute separate documents.

4.1 RESEARCH POLICY-MAKING IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Q1: To what extent have different private and public social sciences and humanities research funding organisations in Europe adjusted their strategies and practices in the light of the agendas developed and pursued at the Commission level?

The findings of the study suggest that the strategies and practices of some public SSH research funding organisations in Europe have been influenced by the agendas developed and pursued at Commission level. However the influence has been limited. The same is the case with those SSH research organisations in the private sector (of which there do not seem to be many compared with those in the public sector), where the influence has been even more limited. It should be noted that accurately quantifying any influence in the public and private sector presents a challenge.

Institutional and programme funding plays the most significant role in supporting SSH research

Public funding has been the main source for the development of the SSH research in all EU Member States. Public funding usually takes the form of institutional funding, which is provided directly to institutions by a central Ministry or Department. This plays the key role in supporting SSH research. Programme funding (funding allocated to specific programmes or projects) is the second most significant channel of funding. Funding allocations vary depending on the number of programmes in each country.

Perception that national SSH priorities and strategies are driven by domestic agendas and to a limited extent by EU FPs

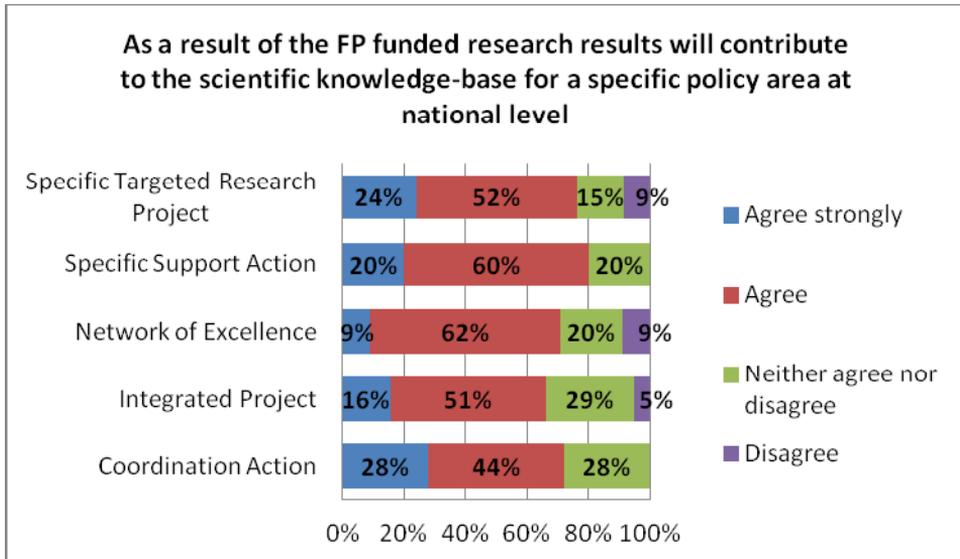
The majority of policy makers interviewed claimed that SSH priorities and strategies in their countries have been determined and driven at national level, based on the priorities and needs domestically. However, findings from the interviews suggest that in some cases SSH elements of the Framework Programmes have had some, albeit limited, influence on national SSH research policies and strategies, which are the key determinants of funding.

Policymakers in some Eastern European Member States (Bulgaria, Poland and Slovenia) stated that the Commission's Framework Programmes have been held up as a model approach for a way in which to fund and to stimulate research. This has resulted in some fine-tuning of institutional structures. For example, in Bulgaria, national SSH programmes have been modelled on EU programmes, and the national criteria for project evaluation and monitoring of projects have been adapted to reflect EU approaches. In addition, policy makers from Belgium and Poland reported that their involvement in the SSH elements of the EU FPs has influenced the way that research funding is administered at the national level, i.e. by following EC rules on allowable costs, funding priorities, programming and eligibility criteria.

These findings from Bulgaria, Poland, Slovenia and Belgium are supported by data collected through the online consultation with policy makers, revealing respondents' perceptions that EU

research policy has to some extent influenced national SSH policy in their countries (4 respondents stated that this had been the case to a “great extent” and 20 stated that this had been the case “to some extent”; n = 37²).

SSH FP research results are perceived to contribute to knowledge base at national and European level



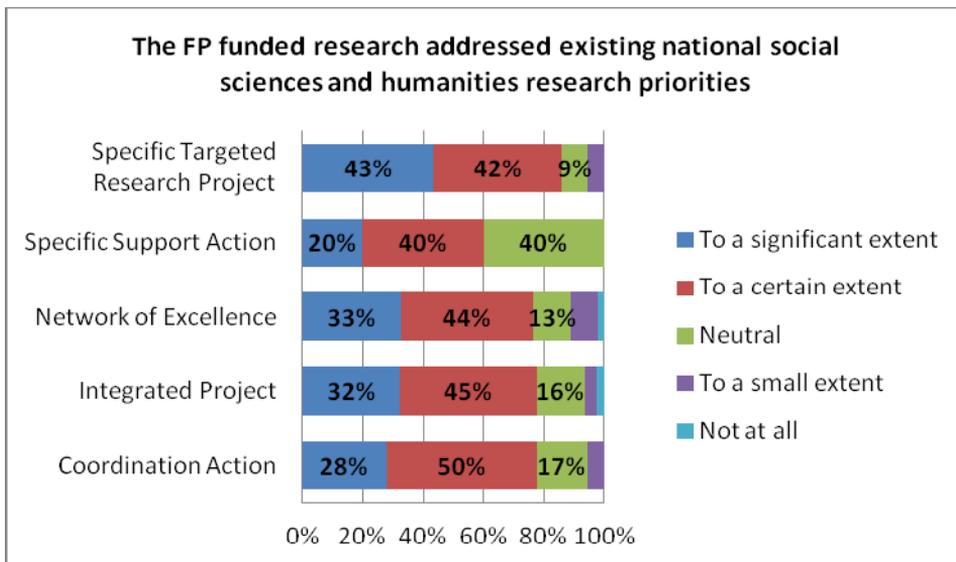
(STREP: n=92; SSA: n=10; NoE: n=55; IP: n=77; CA: n=18)

While there is a general consensus among policy makers that national SSH research policy is driven domestically there is evidence to suggest that the SSH FP has influence and contributes in some way. Feedback from the coordinators and work package leaders indicates that the SSH FP research results will contribute to the scientific knowledge base for a specific policy area at national level. Most significantly, 76% of STREP respondents, 71% of NoE respondents, 67% of IP respondents agreed that research results from the SSH FP will feed into policy areas at national level.

It should be noted that coordinators and work package leaders are even more convinced that SSH FP research results will contribute to the scientific knowledge base for a specific policy area at European level. 75% of STREP respondents, an overwhelming 89% of NoE respondents and 76% of IP respondents agreed that research results from the SSH FP will feed into policy areas at European level.

² **To a great extent:** Bulgaria; Cyprus; Ireland; Romania; **To some extent:** Austria; Czech Republic; Denmark (2); Estonia; Finland; Greece; Ireland; Latvia; Lithuania; Malta; Netherlands; Portugal; Slovakia (2); Slovenia; UK; Switzerland.

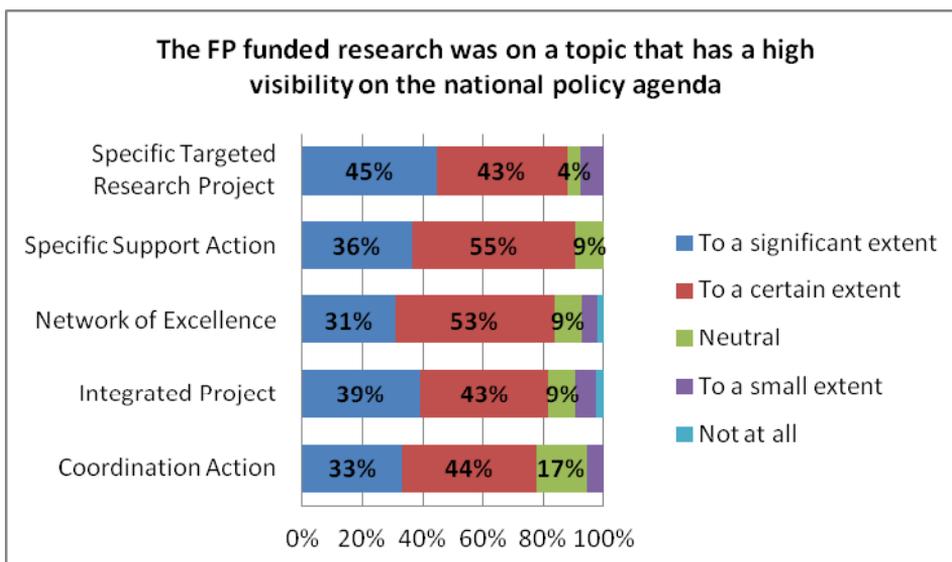
SSH FP research is perceived to address existing national SSH priorities to some extent



(STREP: n=92; SSA: n=10; NoE: n=55; IP: n=77; CA: n=18)

SSH research under the FP is not only contributing to a scientific knowledge base at national level it also seems to be going some way to addressing existing SSH national priorities. Results from the survey of coordinators and workpackage leaders suggest that this is their position on the issue. 43% of STREP respondents believed this to be the case to a significant extent and 42% to a certain extent. A third of respondents from the NoEs and IPs claimed this to be the case to a significant extent and circa 45% to a certain extent.

SSH FP research topics perceived to have high visibility at the national level



(STREP: n=92; SSA: n=11; NoE: n=55; IP: n=77; CA: n=18)

According to coordinators and work package leaders, the SSH research topics under the FP seem to enjoy a good level of visibility at national level. Circa 37% of respondents across all funding instruments (STREPs, SSAs, NoEs, IPs, CAs) felt that this was true to a significant extent and 48% agreed with this to a certain extent. This demonstrates that at the very least many of the research areas covered by the SSH FP are relevant at national level.

Policy maker involvement increases throughout the various stages of SSH FP research - from design through to implementation and dissemination

The survey of coordinators and work package leaders showed that engagement with policy makers increases as projects move from the design stage to the research implementation stage and increases further when the research starts to be disseminated and when policy recommendations are formulated. Circa 30% of respondents agreed that their research involved policy makers at the design stage compared with 40 % at the implementation stage and 60% at the dissemination stage.

Involvement in SSH FP has resulted in participation in national research policy making / advisory bodies and evaluation research panels for some coordinators and workpackage leaders

Circa a third of coordinators and work package leaders claimed to have been asked to participate in national research policy making / advisory bodies as a result of their involvement in the SSH FP. This is particularly evident for those involved in STREPs and NoEs where 32% and 37% of respondents agreed that this was the case respectively.

An even greater proportion of coordinators and work package leaders claimed to have been asked to participate in evaluation panels for research projects / programmes. Across the funding instruments it was those involved in the STREPs and NoEs who were most likely to be involved with 46% and 43% claiming to be asked to participate respectively.

Limited involvement of private sector in SSH research funding

It seems that very few private sector organisations are involved in funding SSH research in the majority of countries throughout Europe. The fact that there is very little information available on private sector and its link with SSH research also suggests that funding from this sector is limited.

Based on input from policy makers during interviews and the survey and bearing in mind the evidently low levels of engagement between the private sector and SSH research, these findings suggest that the Commission agenda has had little impact on influencing private sector strategy in the area of SSH.

Limited influence on SSH research strategies/practices in the charity sector

Information on SSH research funding charities and foundations was collected for the UK, Ireland, Germany and Hungary. The charities and foundations in these countries, such as the Volkswagen Stiftung (Germany) or the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (UK), are independent and appear to pursue their own agendas and goals. No evidence could be collected to suggest that they coordinate their work with other research funders or that they have adjusted their strategies and practices in the light of the agendas developed and pursued by the European Commission.

Q2: What are the factors that differentiate between national responses (e.g. research funding and performance structures, existence of research council type organisations, existence of important private players, size and importance of national effort in SSH etc.)?

The most significant differences in national responses to FP SSH research relate to the size of national SSH research funding as well as scientific state-of-the-art levels.

Member States with highest level of SSH-related expenditure tend to have most FP participations and coordinations

There is a correlation between the levels of domestic SSH investment and the level of activity of EU Member States in the Framework Programmes. EU countries with high levels of SSH-related governmental and higher education sector expenditure also tend to participate in and coordinate the highest number of SSH projects under the FPs. For example, this was the case for Germany as well as the UK and France.³

By comparison, researchers in some smaller, and especially Eastern European Member States, where levels of SSH research funding are significantly lower than in the larger EU Member States, are less involved with FP SSH projects.

Eastern European countries participate significantly less in SSH-related projects under FP5 and FP6 and have fewer coordinator roles. For example, this is the case for Estonia, Lithuania and Bulgaria. In addition, Latvia, the Czech Republic and Romania have not coordinated any SSH-related projects under either of the Framework Programmes examined as part of this evaluation.

Different funding systems exist across the EU Member States

Another factor that plays a role in differentiating between national responses is the existence of different funding systems across the EU Member States. Institutional SSH funding, meaning that funding is directly allocated to institutions, plays the most significant role in all EU Member States, while individual SSH funding (funding for individual researchers or research teams) is less common.

SSH funding through the EU Framework Programmes plays the most significant part in supporting research outside domestic funding across all countries, and is particularly important for smaller countries which do not have large SSH budgets like Greece, Hungary, Estonia, and Poland.

Information on private sector research funding is scarce but the limited data available suggests that there is an increasing trend in terms of business enterprise sector expenditure for SSH. However, the data is not comprehensive enough for conclusive statements especially since there is no specific data on those EU Member States (Germany, France, the UK and Italy) who spend the most on SSH.

Research Councils with SSH component and Science Academies represent SSH domestically

The majority of EU Member States have a research council type of organisation, or a formalised system of research funding. However, while most countries do not have special bodies and/or advisory organisations dedicated to SSH only, there is often an SSH component of the wider Research Council.

In some Eastern European Member States, in particular Lithuania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland, the traditional science academies have been influential since the political change in 1989, and are still important in determining SSH research. Some of the traditional public academic and research institutions are still affected by old hierarchical structures. Coupled with relatively low salaries compared to those in other Member States, and often poor

³ Please note that there are no comprehensive data available on government/higher education sector expenditure for SSH for the UK and France, but both countries arguably are two of the highest R&D spending countries in Europe.

working conditions, this has contributed to a brain drain in some instances, creating an altogether larger challenge for SSH research in these countries.

The factors described above seem to be the main reason for differences between national responses to SSH research. There is clearly a gap between the size and importance of national effort in SSH between larger Member States versus smaller and newer EU countries, due to funding streams as well as the development of SSH research levels.

Q3: How have the activities of the thematic research programmes in SSH interacted with other community programmes involved in social sciences and humanities (e.g. ERA-NETs, infrastructures) in stimulating responses from national institutions?

With regard to SSH research in particular, the evidence collected suggests that the SSH policies and strategies across the EU have been determined and driven first and foremost at national level, based on national priorities and needs. However, there was a general consensus among policy makers interviewed that the SSH elements of the FPs have had some, albeit limited, influence on national SSH research policies and strategies.

The increasing importance of SSH research perceived across European Member States, as well as the increasing participation in SSH thematic programmes in FP5 and FP6, especially by larger Member States, have also created the possibility for intensified interactions between thematic research programmes in SSH and other community programmes involved in social sciences and humanities (e.g. ERA-NETs, infrastructures). These interactions have to some extent stimulated responses from national institutions.

High participation in ERA-Net scheme by policy-makers across the EU

National policy-makers from all EU Member States have participated in at least one SSH-related ERA-Net. In total, 104 involvements in all ERA-Nets were identified across the EU, and the involvement in SSH-related ERA-Nets as a proportion of all ERA-Nets amounted to 11%-16% for many of the larger Member States, including France, Germany, Poland and the UK. While Bulgaria has only been involved in 5 ERA-Nets, 3 of these were related to SSH.

Benefits of ERA-Net scheme perceived at national level

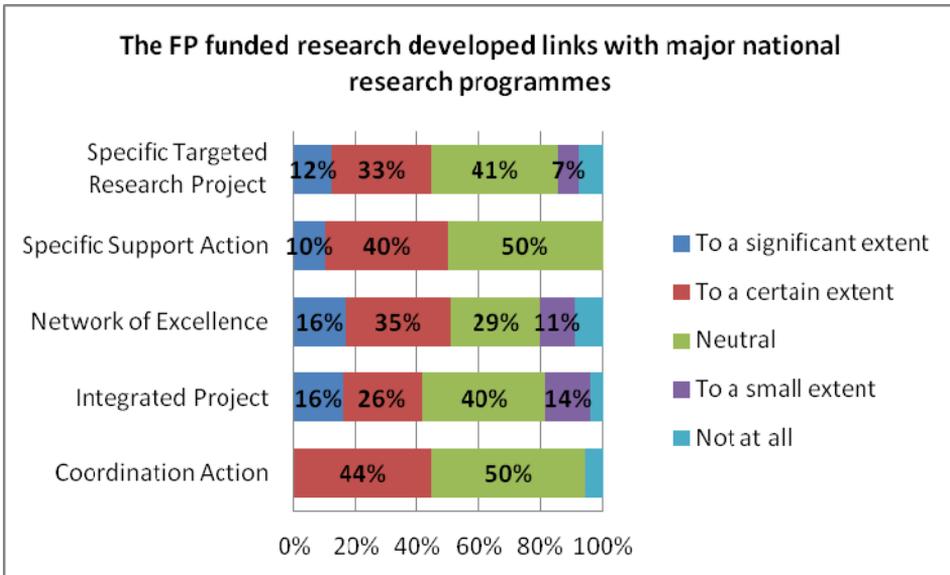
Interviews with policy-makers revealed that the ERA-Net scheme is seen as helping to bring national authorities together because its benefits are highly valued and well perceived at national level (e.g. structuring effect by helping to bring national authorities together around common themes; by establishing contacts to colleagues in other countries; learning from each other and exchanging good practice). Furthermore, the pooling of resources resulting from the ERA-Net scheme was seen by policy makers as facilitating high quality results.

Thus, while the ERA-Nets as such seem to have stimulated responses from national institutions, the evaluation findings show that the activities of the thematic research programmes in SSH have had some influences on national institutions and structures, too.

FP funded research projects had impact on national policy orientation and research programmes

The results of the survey with coordinators and work package leaders (see graph below) for example show that ca. 50% of respondents across research projects under the different funding instruments thought that their research has enabled the development of links with major national research programmes.

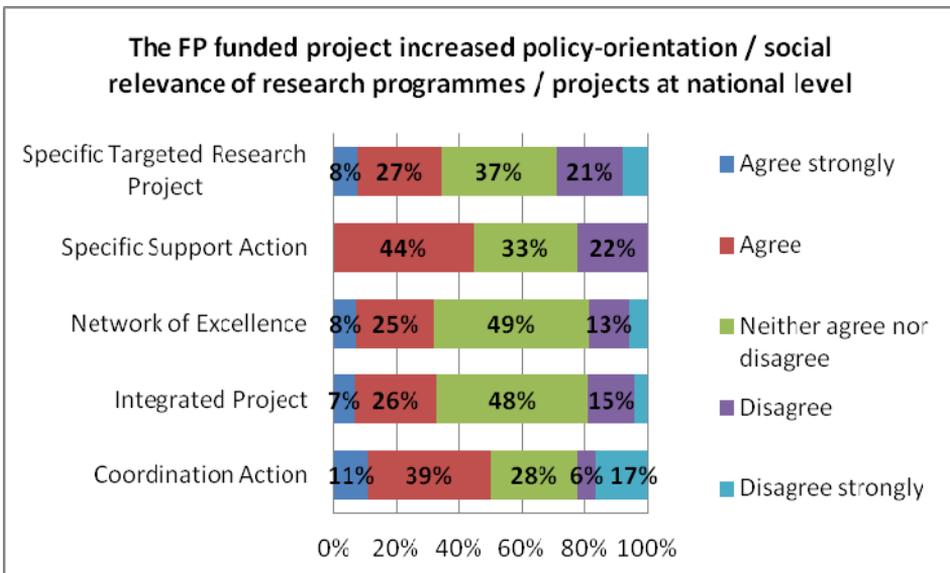
Figure 1: The FP funded research developed links with major national research programmes



(STREP: n=92; SSA: n=10; NoE: n=55; IP: n=77; CA: n=18)

In addition, between 33% and 50% of coordinators and work package leaders for SSH-related projects under the different funding instruments agreed that the SSH Framework Programmes have increased national policy orientation, the social relevance of research programmes, as well as research projects at national level.

Figure 2: The FP funded project increased policy-orientation / social relevance of research programmes / projects at national level



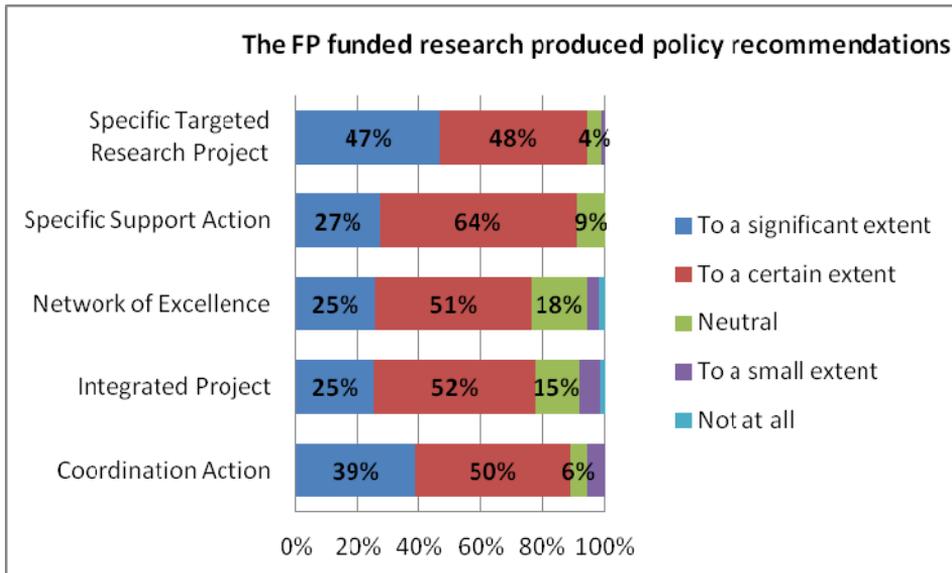
(STREP: n=90; SSA: n=9; NoE: n=53; IP: n=73; CA: n=18)

Moreover, feedback from the survey with coordinators and work package leaders suggests that SSH research results under the Framework Programmes contribute to the knowledge base for a specific policy area at national and European level. Coordinators and work package

leaders also perceive that SSH research topics under the FPs have a good level of visibility at national level.

Most importantly, coordinators and work package leaders of SSH-related projects under the different FP funding instruments were highly convinced that their FP funded research produced policy recommendations.

Figure 3: The FP funded research produced policy recommendations



(STREP: n=92; SSA: n=11; NoE: n=55; IP: n=75; CA: n=18)

These findings suggest that on the one hand, the ERA-Nets have had a direct influence on policy-makers by enabling them to collaborate with other EU policy-makers from different Member States in developing good practice. They have made national policy-makers aware of and possibly more appreciative of SSH research at a European level. On the other hand, SSH-projects under the Framework Programmes and their related research outcomes have to some extent influenced national research policies, by way of research projects developing links with national research programmes, by increasing national policy-orientation or social relevance of research programmes and by producing policy recommendations at the national level.

Thus, each scheme offers different possibilities to stimulate responses from national institutions. Overall, all schemes provide some sort of advantage and can be seen as complementing each other in strengthening the European Research Area.

4.2 THE STRUCTURING EFFECTS OF LARGE INSTRUMENTS (PARTICULARLY NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE)

Q4: Have the large projects (NoEs and IPs) delivered economies of scale in terms of structuring the relevant research communities in Europe?

Economies of scale in SSH research are a contested issue. In the interviews conducted in the context of this study, project coordinators and participants highlighted the following benefits associated with the Networks of Excellence (NoEs) and Integrated Projects (IPs):

Increased networking between researchers across the EU from complementary research disciplines and generating of new research

Evidence stemming from the interviews with coordinators of IPs and NoEs suggests that IPs have produced benefits in terms of generating new research knowledge and NoEs in terms of the formation of pan-European networks.

By including a high number of research teams across the EU who are jointly working on a particular area of research, IPs send a signal to the scientific community about the increased visibility of a specific topic and the research carried out in this area. This potentially lays the way for future oriented European research in the same or a closely related field.

NoEs were seen as achieving benefits by networking researchers from different countries and topic areas. By facilitating networking beyond the borders of research disciplines with researchers in complementary fields, NoEs created structures to bring researchers together on a wide scale, avoiding a more fragmented approach and providing the potential for generating new projects.

These views were expressed during interviews with researchers in five EU Members States as well as the focus groups with researchers carried out in Poland, Norway and Germany. Interviewees and focus group participants saw the inter-disciplinary environment as one of the greatest challenges for researchers working on FP projects, possibly reflecting relative weaknesses in the promotion of inter-disciplinary working within some European Member States. The fact that the SSH programme explicitly encourages inter-disciplinary approaches was therefore highly valued.

Added value through multiplying effect of the variety of knowledge being brought to the network

Interviews with coordinators of NoEs and IPs referred to benefits through the variety of knowledge being brought to the networks by individual participants (knowledge accumulation) and subsequently shared with external stakeholders through the dissemination of research results. This was seen as a key strength of the large instruments.

NoE coordinators as well as participants agreed that the networks enabled a high level of knowledge exchange and interchange of network partners and established cross cluster initiatives, which lead to joint research results not otherwise possible to achieve. NoEs were also perceived as facilitating innovative approaches, new relationships and consolidating relations between existing sub networks.

Coordinators of IPs considered that their projects had led to advances in the state of the art through the involvement of researchers across Europe. This was backed up by the findings of the survey with coordinators and work-package leaders, where 84% of respondents involved in IPs either agreed or agreed strongly with the statement that their project had led to significant advances in the state of the art.

Increased possibilities for data collection and dissemination, access to a greater number of stakeholders across the EU and interaction between different levels of researcher careers

Coordinators and project participants interviewed found that economies of scale were achieved through the ability to undertake EU-wide comparative research that the IPs and NoEs were able to offer. Both instruments hold the potential for wider scale collection of data through pan-European research. Moreover, the large scale of projects also lead to increased possibilities for disseminating research results. These were not viewed as being possible in smaller scale projects with smaller budgets and time frames as well as a lesser number of and a less geographically diverse set of project partners.

The large scale instruments also facilitated engagement of a greater number of stakeholders across the EU. In addition, NoEs and IPs enabled the rare interaction between researchers

with different levels of experience and seniority, working within the individual projects. In particular this provided an opportunity for junior researchers to present results to research leaders in their field. Perhaps due to their size, the exposure of young researchers to senior researchers and vice versa seems to have been even greater within the NoEs than within the IPs. Another reason for this might be that the IPs were driven by the need to produce visible research results in their respective research fields, whereas the intention of NoEs was not to produce new research and could therefore take a more flexible approach to the inclusion of more junior researchers.

These views were expressed during interviews with researchers as well as during the focus groups. Interviewees and focus group participants found that the NoEs, given their specific focus on networking and supporting international travel and events, played a particularly important role for early career researchers in terms of building their networks. NoEs were seen as enabling early career researchers to build diverse networks both with their peers and also with more senior researchers.

Potential of large instrument research results to generate new research projects and increased opportunities for future collaboration

Interviews with coordinators suggest that the large instruments provided benefits by developing research results in a particular area or on a topic that could be used as inputs for new research projects, either at the European level or by initiating smaller projects with more focussed research. Moreover, coordinators saw the large instruments as facilitating the identification of partners that could be effective for future collaboration based on the experience gained through the project. Participation in a NoE or IP has provided the opportunity for participants who may not have ordinarily partnered to experience working together. For many participants it has increased the number and diversity of potential collaborators in the future.

No economies of scale achieved in administration and management functions

From an administration and project management perspective, coordinators did not consider NoEs or IPs to have achieved economies of scale. The main reason is that the larger projects have required efforts of a similar magnitude on the management and administration front, even taking into account the development of detailed project structures for assigning responsibility to different work package leaders. Coordinators of NoEs confirmed that the large administrative burden that came with participation in the networks was the main constraint of the instrument. This aspect was particularly challenging for smaller universities and research teams.

Q5: What kind of structures have been developed and how important have these been for research in the field concerned? (e.g. in terms of excellence, drawing talent into the field, achieving professional recognition, etc.)

Both, NoEs as well as IPs have developed a number of structures, which have been important for the running of the projects themselves as well as for (future) research in the field concerned.

Organisational structure of project teams crucial factor in their success

Interviews with coordinators of NoEs and IPs suggest that coordinating projects funded under the large instruments made it necessary to introduce new ways of managing and administration, given the large size of the projects in terms of the number of partners and longer duration than those funded under FP5.

According to project coordinators, the architecture of project teams was crucial for the ability of participants to make a meaningful contribution to the project, adding value to the other parts of

the consortium. Coordinators selected the lead researchers in their fields for respective work packages, forming the core around which other researchers were grouped. This was seen as essential for effective networking.

Some coordinators also commented that the first year of their projects was mainly focused on the presentation and communication of the state of the art in different topic areas and hypotheses with regard to the development of the discipline. This was seen as crucial to facilitate a smooth integration of research and networking efforts.

The introduction of these ways of managing and administering projects funded under the large instruments was new and did not exist for projects under FP5.

On-going integration of research results as opposed to only reporting results at the end of the project

The large size and longer duration of IPs and NoEs made it necessary to integrate research efforts effectively at different levels of the project team hierarchy. Given the complex interrelationships created with different work packages drawing on different research groups, an on-going integration of research results across project stages was necessary, because results were significant for the progress of different aspects of the project.

In addition, other mechanisms were developed across projects to manage the integration of work, including the development of large databases, intra and extranet, as well as protocols for interaction between the different partners on a bi- and multilateral level.

This was a change compared to former projects, in which the integration of results was reportedly carried out by the project coordinator at the end of the project.

Creation of community of researchers using common vocabulary and methods

A key structuring effect at the project level was that the large instruments created a community of researchers, using common vocabulary, contexts and methods, as well as common understanding despite linguistic and cultural barriers between researchers and research institutes. Coordinators as well as project participants of the large instruments reported this to have resulted in a change in researchers' understanding for the need of European comparative research. One coordinator even thought that this development enabled researchers to interact on more equal terms with the more dominant research communities in the USA.

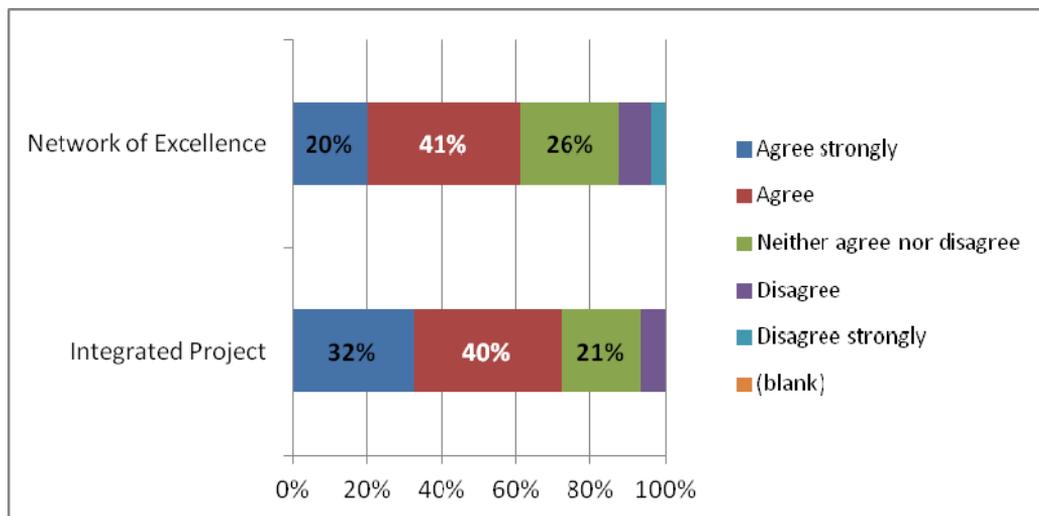
The significance of this new community of researchers appears to be particularly strong with regard to the NoEs, due to the fact that the potential number of researchers involved is significantly higher than for the IPs.

Size of projects enabling the development of pan-European research results

Interviews with coordinators and participants of NoEs and IPs suggested that an important structuring effect of the new instruments was that the larger size of the projects facilitated the collection of large amounts of new data that would not have been possible within a smaller project.

The online survey with coordinators and work-package leaders of IPs and NoEs showed that 72% of respondents who took part in IPs and 61% of respondents who took part in NoEs strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that IPs and NoEs led to essential research that would not have been otherwise possible.

Figure 4: Essential research that would not have otherwise been possible



(NoE: n=80; IP: n=110)

Moreover, the evidence collected shows that the large instruments gave European researchers in the SSH the potential to develop research results with real European coverage through the involvement of numerous partners from across Europe, including Eastern European countries. Interview partners did not consider this as having been possible under FP5.

Size of projects and pan-European consortia impact on researchers and their institutions

Interviews with coordinators and project participants of IPs and NoEs also suggested that the new structures developed through the large instruments, as described above, have had an impact on individual researchers and research institutions. The new instruments helped to create a larger community of researchers with an understanding of and the capacity for Europe-wide research and the challenges it encompasses.

For example, the involvement of newer, less experienced Member States in the large instruments is also likely to help these countries to play a greater role in future Framework Programmes through the knowledge and experience gained through participating in projects funded under the large instruments in FP6.

Size of projects increase the administrative burden and have a negative impact for mid-career researchers;

Interviews with researchers on their career advancement as well as interviews with coordinator and work-package leaders revealed that the increased size of projects funded under the large instruments put heavy demands on coordinators particularly with regard to the amount of administration they have to deal with. Several comments were received from coordinators that the amount of funding to support the organisational/administrative aspects of the consortia was not proportionate to the additional work that larger instruments required and that this was an area to be addressed.

In addition, the necessary management experience and expertise of coordinators to successfully organise and run these large projects with diverse teams, which usually only senior researchers could provide, led to the decrease of the potential for mid-career researchers to take on projects of this size.

Increased promotion of research excellence through publications

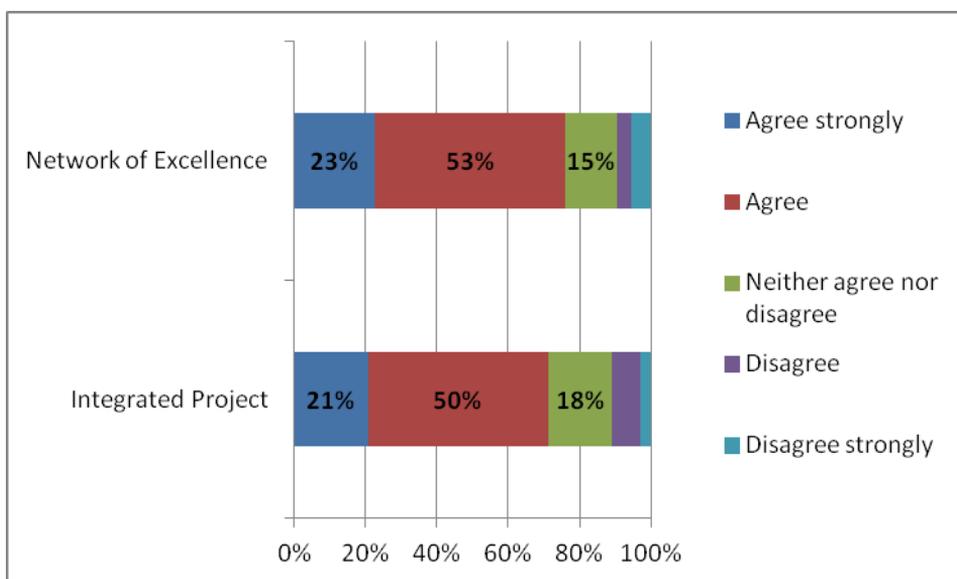
The evidence collected for this evaluation also suggests that the new structures introduced by the large instruments have been important for the research in the field concerned through the promotion of excellence and by drawing talent into the field.

Coordinators and participants of NoEs and IPs stated that the involvement in projects funded under these instruments enhanced the professional development of participants through the research outputs that were produced by the individual teams. This was a particular value to early career researchers and played a role in accelerating their career progression.

In addition, researchers interviewed about research career progressions pointed out that publications are one of the primary indicators of research excellence.

The findings of the online survey with coordinators and work-package leaders show that the participation in projects funded under the large instruments have increased the opportunities for academic publication and dissemination (76% of NoE respondents and 71% of IP respondents agreed strongly or agreed with this statement).

Figure 5: The FP funded research increased my opportunities for academic publication and dissemination



(NoE: n=75; IP: n=101)

Other ways of disseminating research results were conferences and workshops, of which some have also been accessible to researchers outside the consortium. For example, the wider research community, policy makers, civil society and the public at large have been invited to participate. Reaching outside the project to the communities directly interested in the respective research areas was seen as one of the main differences between the large instruments and funding instruments under FP5.

During the interviews many senior researchers reported a significant impact of the large instruments in improving both, the quality and quantity of publications. The main "indicator" referred to is the international excellence which is generally inferred to equate with peer reviewed journals published in English. Especially respondents from new and less research intense Member States seemed to benefit from these increased publication possibilities. However, some researchers spoke of a risk in this shift towards international publications in English, in that the national and local level impact of research may be weakened.

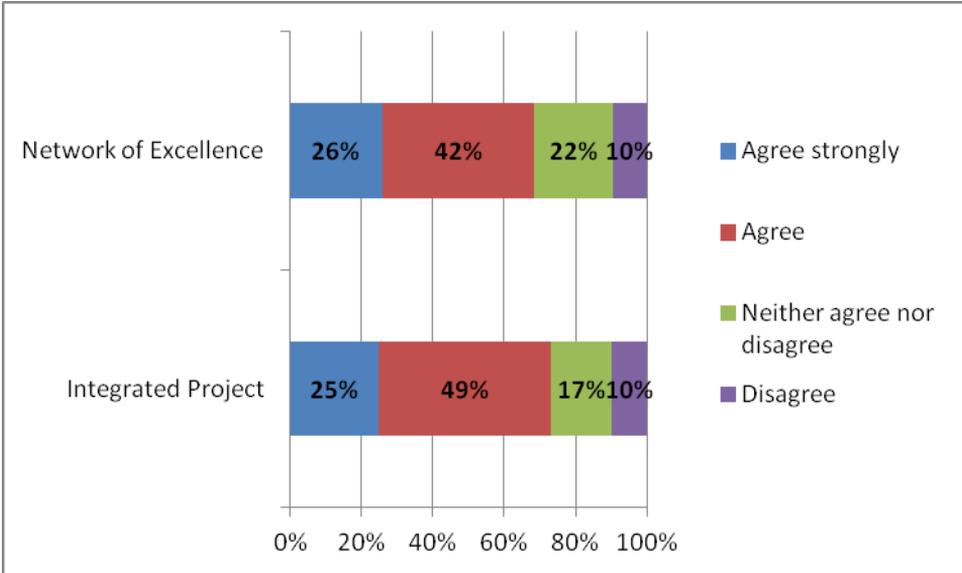
At the same time there is still concern that the style of the large-scale projects with complex inter-disciplinary, international and mixed-level seniority can encourage work to be published that does not meet with traditional concepts of “excellence”. One issue raised on a number of occasions is that there is pressure to publish collaboratively in the newly developed large teams, and this can result in joint publications with an “unevenness” of quality, where weaker material may be “carried” by the stronger material and the reputations of key players. Moreover, at national level, concepts of “excellence” are reportedly still closely related to disciplinary specialism, meaning that they are in constant tension with the ambition for more holistic inter- and multi-disciplinary work.

Increased promotion of research excellence through networking

Coordinators and participants of IPs as well as NoEs perceived the networking opportunities stemming from projects funded under the large instruments as being a great advantage of these types of European research initiatives, because they add value to the professional development of (young) researchers and allow for the formation of personal networks with other researchers cross-field.

The successful networking of researchers involved in IPs and NoEs was also seen as automatically promoting excellence and attracting researchers in the field to participate in these projects. The findings of the online survey suggest that this especially applied to high quality early career researchers (68% of NoE respondents and 74% of IP respondents agreed strongly or agreed with this statement).

Figure 6: The FP funded research improved the consortium’s ability to attract high quality early career researchers



(NoE: n=73; IP: n=101)

Networks bringing in people from outside the EU

As outlined above, many of the developed networks evolved along geographical / international lines. Evidence stemming from the interviews with coordinators and work-package leaders as well as scientists on career development revealed that the involvement in the large instruments played an important role in internationalising existing networks.

The international co-operation generated by these networks was perceived as having a great impact in particular in those countries and contexts where research is generally less

internationalised. In these situations the networking function was seen to play an important role in overcoming fragmentation in SSH along national lines, while respondents from more research-intensive environments were more likely to have strong pre-existing international connections.

NoEs seen as particularly effective networking mechanisms

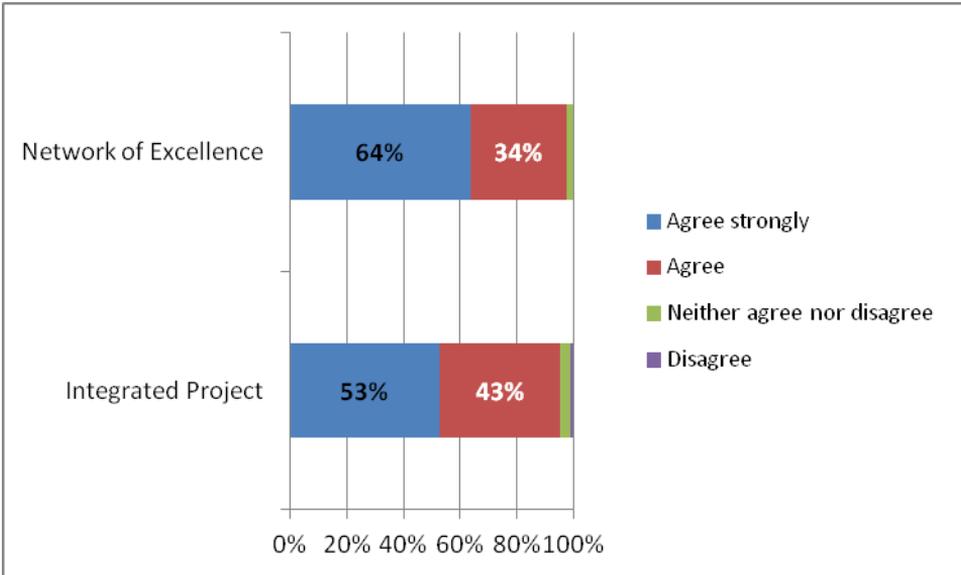
The NoEs were seen as a particularly effective mechanism for creating new networks, encouraging researchers to go beyond their “comfort zone” of networking and significantly extending their contacts both within their research fields and in complementary areas.

In addition, given the enlarged size and geographic spread of the networks established, coordinators and participants expressed the sense of the networks being truly “European” rather than bringing together established contacts within a smaller group of countries. They perceived this development as having the potential to break the deadlock of small executive networks of researchers in specific disciplines.

However, IPs, too, facilitated the networking between researchers and were described by coordinators and work-package leaders as a “catalyst for collaboration” between at least some of the consortium partners in the future.

The data from the online survey with coordinators and work package leaders involved in NoEs and IPs show that respondents perceived that their involvement had increased their networking opportunities (98% of NoE respondents and 96% of IP respondents agreed strongly or agreed with this statement).

Figure 7: The FP project led to an increased volume of networking opportunities



(NoE: n=80; IP: n=110)

Most core operational networks were pre-existing

Interviews with coordinators and work-package leaders revealed that the newly formed networks usually involved some partner institutes with whom coordinators had collaborated before. One coordinator even argued that a NoE under FP6 cannot be developed without previous networking experience gained during a project under FP5. Other partners involved might be strategically chosen to fill gaps.

Moreover, there was a lot of scepticism about whether the networks would be durable in the long term. Evidence collected during the interviews with researchers on career progressions suggests that the extent to which those networks developed in the course of an FP project are sustained after project completion is heavily dependent upon the ability to attract new funding. In many cases networks lasted for the duration of the project although individual relationship within in them may well outlive the projects and be revitalised some years later.

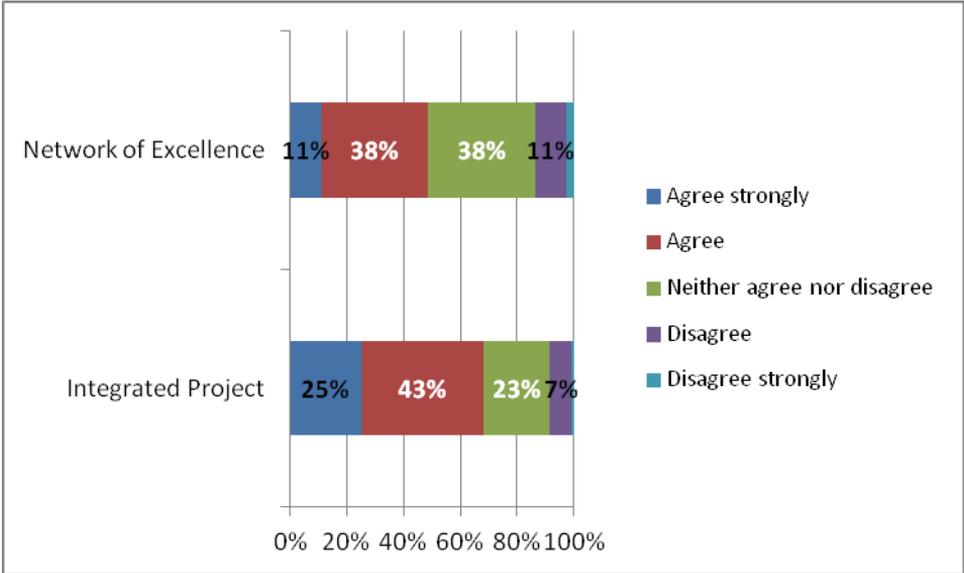
Q6: How important have such projects (NoEs and IPs) been in terms of developing European infrastructures and training for the fields concerned? How (potentially) important are these infrastructures?

High proportion of NoEs and IPs have developed some form of infrastructure

Evidence collected throughout the evaluation suggests that NoEs and IPs have played an important role in developing European infrastructures and training for the fields concerned.

The results of the online survey with coordinators and work-package leaders involved in IPs and NoEs suggest that projects funded under the large instruments have played a role in developing European data-sets and infrastructures. Especially respondents involved in IPs found that their projects had led to the development of shared research methodologies, indicators, statistics, databases etc. (68% of IP respondents, compared to 49% of NoE respondents).

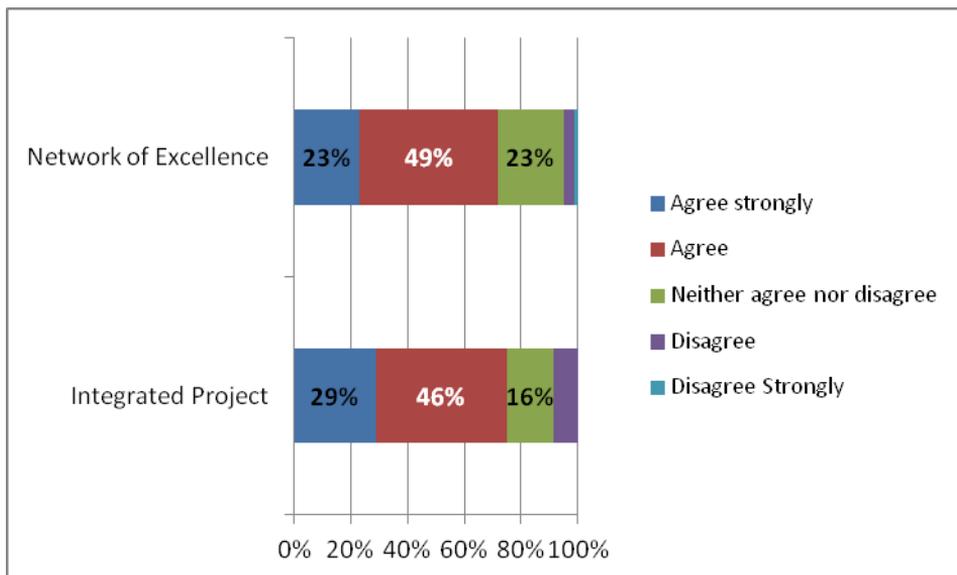
Figure 8: The FP project led to the development of shared research methodologies, indicators, statistics, databases etc.



(NoE: n=80; IP: n=107)

The survey shows that the large instruments are perceived as having resulted in the generation of new datasets and archives relevant (72% of NoE and 75% of IP respondents) and accessible (63% of NoE and 59% of IP respondents) to researchers outside the consortium.

Figure 9: The FP funded research resulted in the generation of new datasets/archives relevant to researchers outside the consortium



(NoE: n=78; IP: n=104)

These findings show that NoEs and IPs were important for the development of datasets and European infrastructures.

Key element of NoEs and IPs is training opportunities for junior researchers in particular

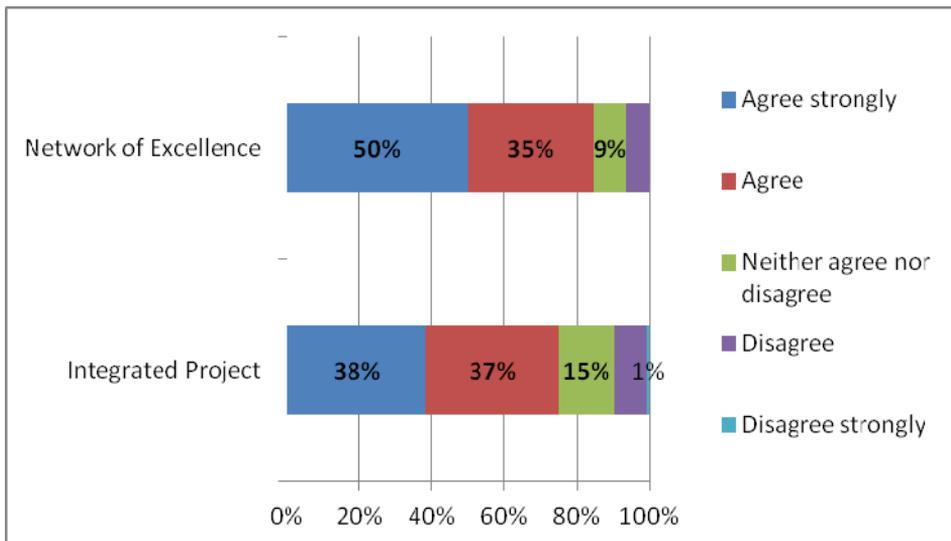
Evidence collected during the interviews with coordinators and work package leaders involved in NoEs and IPs suggests that a key added value of their projects was the training element provided, particularly for more junior researchers.

For example, junior researchers involved in NoEs and IPs had the chance to speak at conferences and present their research findings – an opportunity that in the academic world usually only senior researchers can take advantage of.

Perhaps due to their size, the exposure of young researchers to senior researchers and vice versa seems even greater within the NoEs than within the IPs. This was beneficial for younger researchers in terms of unparalleled networking opportunities by gaining access to researchers in prominent positions, which was seen by some participants as highly rewarding and unusual. On the other hand, senior researchers have been challenged by younger and more junior team members who came with different approaches, ways of looking at things and sources of evidence.

These findings were supported by the data collected through the online survey with coordinators and work-package leaders. Survey respondents found that the NoEs and IPs enhanced the development of training programmes for junior researchers (85% of NoE respondents and 75% of IP respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement).

Figure 10: The FP funded project supported the development of training programmes for junior researchers



(NoEs: n=78; IP: n=104)

By comparison, it was mainly IPs which had supported training programmes for mid-career and senior researchers (52%), while only 35% of respondents participating in NoEs agreed with this statement. (NoE: n=77; IP: n=99).

Infrastructures important for dissemination and effective collaboration

Infrastructures (including databases) developed by NoEs and IPs helped projects to disseminate outputs and original data which were provided by researchers and projects themselves. Infrastructures created took the form of platforms of collaborative activity or portals of entry to an area in which leading players are cooperating. Regardless of their form, they led to effective collaboration and helped to address societal issues of key pan-European concern. The kind of infrastructures put together by “large instrument” projects are illustrated by the two case studies IMISCOE and CHALLENGE.

For example, in project IMISCOE (NoE – *International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe*), a portal to a large portfolio of research and informational resources was created providing access to qualitative and quantitative findings, published outputs of various types, records of meetings and workshops, news and commentary, that network members and others can use to provide themselves with a state of the art positioning and identify a contribution. In addition, bottom-up research ideas have come about as a result of the networking created, thus the project could be considered as an incubator of research.

The infrastructure developed by the project CHALLENGE (IP – *The Changing Landscape of European Liberty and Security*) forms a platform of scholars from multi-disciplinary and cross-European backgrounds, who might not normally have worked together, working on areas of common interest. It was foreseen as a tool for setting high standards of intellectual debate around security and liberty issues in Europe, generating new research approaches.

Overall infrastructures developed by projects funded as large instruments have been important for effective collaboration as well as dissemination of research results.

4.3 RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES (INCLUDING LARGE COMPARATIVE DATA SETS; TOOLS ET AL)

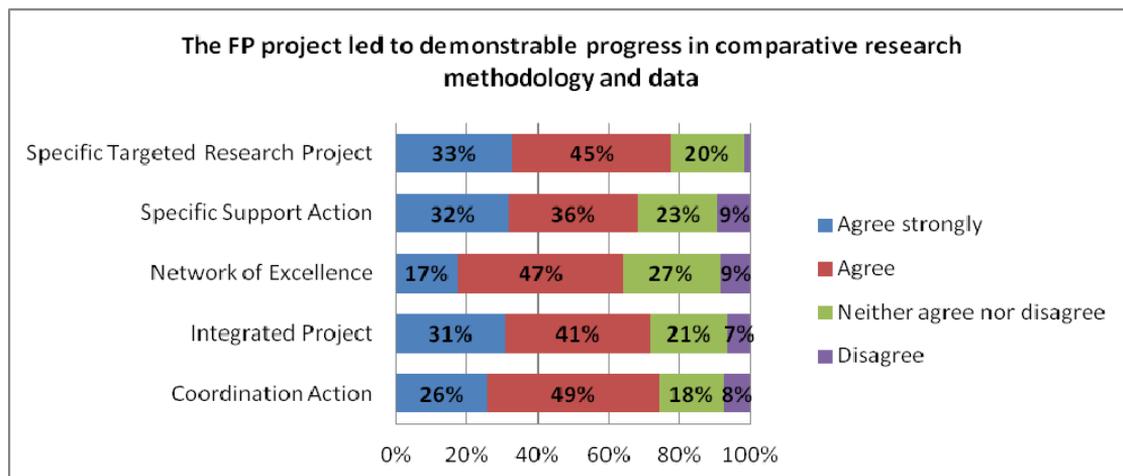
Q7: To what extent have the FP5 and FP6 research programmes in SSH contributed to the development of comparative research in Europe in terms of methodology, infrastructures and training?

Evidence collected for this evaluation suggests that the Framework Programmes (FP5 and FP6) have made a significant contribution to the development of comparative research in Europe in terms of methodology, infrastructures and training.

Demonstrable progress in comparative research methodology and data

The findings of the online survey with coordinators and work-package leaders give an indication that the majority of respondents agreed strongly or agreed with the statement that the Framework Programme led to demonstrable progress in comparative research methodology and data. However, it has to be kept in mind that there were different numbers of responses for the different funding instruments (see below).

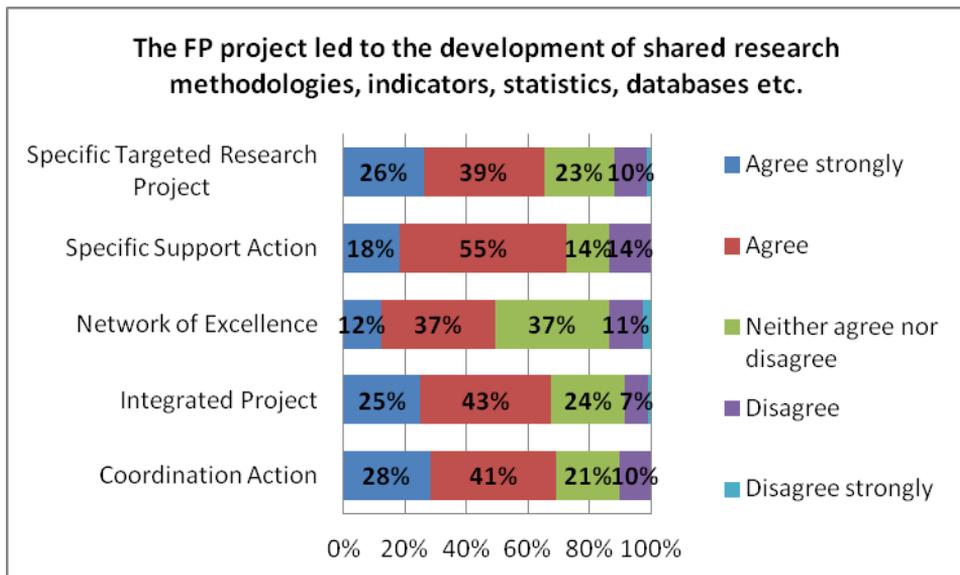
Figure 11: The FP project led to demonstrable progress in comparative research methodology and data



(STREP: n=153; SSA: n=22; NoE: n=81; IP: n=107; CA: n=39)

In addition, most coordinators and work-package leaders responding to the survey agreed strongly or agreed that their project led to the development of shared research methodologies, indicators, statistics and databases. However, only 49% of NoE respondents agreed strongly or agreed with this statement.

Figure 12: The FP project led to the development of shared research methodologies, indicators, statistics, databases etc.



(STREP: n=153; SSA: n=22; NoE: n=81; IP: n=108; CA: n=39)

Pan-European research as principal “raison d’être”

For many projects undertaken in FP5 (3rd call) and FP6 research programmes in SSH comparative research was a principal “raison d’être” in terms of shared methodology as well as the infrastructures/datasets created.

Some projects undertook comparative research on data that was analysed and archived in the course of the project. Other projects created archives of data in various ways, on which researchers outside the projects might subsequently undertake comparative research. To facilitate such external access, necessary methodological approaches and/or on-line training modules were developed.

The case studies provide evidence that there have been genuine and unique contributions from SSH research programmes to comparative research in Europe in terms of the infrastructures created. For example, the output of the project EUROCCUPATIONS was an infrastructure in order to improve the facilitation of comparative research both for those involved and for other researchers; the project ESS is creating an infrastructure that allows for comparability across a wide range of socially relevant characteristics both by those involved in gathering the data and creating the infrastructure datasets, as well as for subsequent research work by others for whom such data is now available for analysis.

Moreover, during the interviews with researchers on their career progression, many respondents at all career stages emphasise the impact that their experience of working on FP projects has had on the development of comparative research in the field of SSH. Several argued that this paradigm shift could not have happened in the absence of EU funding and noted the marked impact it has had on their career as comparative researchers.

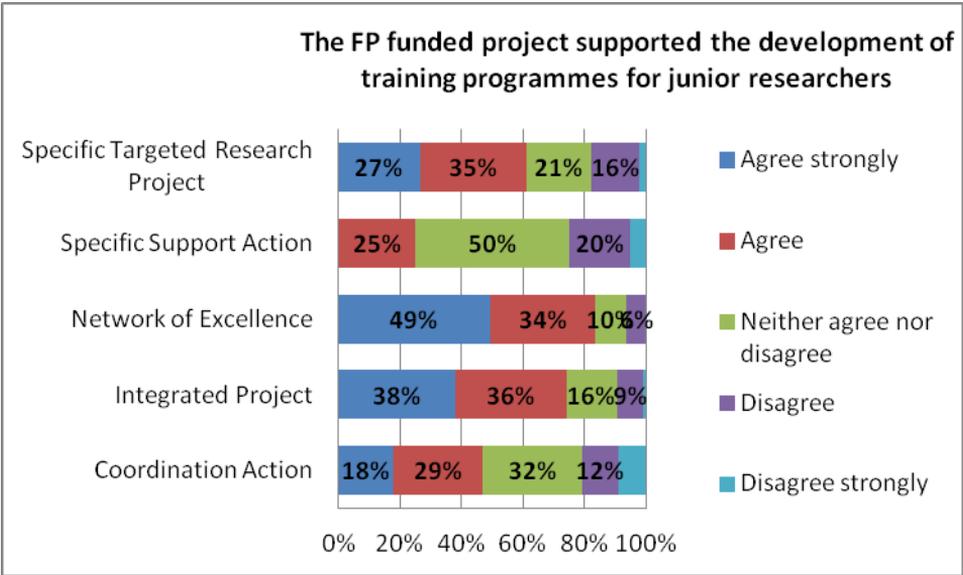
Training in the form of “on the job” apprenticeships

Although several of the network projects included structured training, evidence stemming from the interviews with researchers on their career progressions suggests that much of the training

taking place took the form of “on-the-job” apprenticeship training which may have proven more effective in the SSH Framework Programme research context. However, researchers were less likely to identify major impacts in terms of training in substantive research methods.

The training received during the FP programmes seems extremely important in terms of career development, in particular for early career researchers. The results of the online survey reveal that the majority of FP-funded projects supported the development of training programmes for junior researchers. This was especially the case for STREPs, NoEs and IPs.

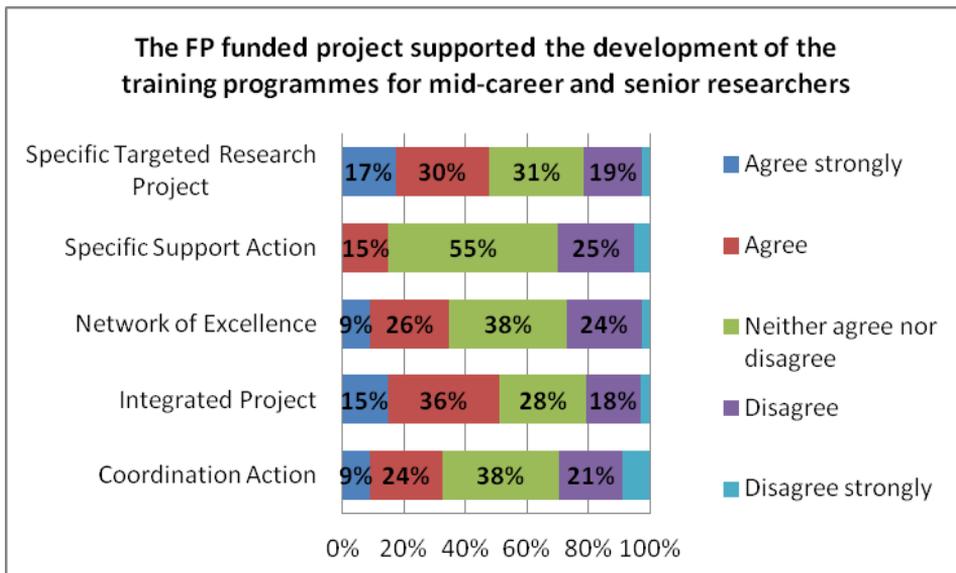
Figure 13: The FP funded project supported the development of training programmes for junior researchers



(STREP: n=147; SSA: n=20; NoE: n=79; IP: n=105; CA: n=34)

However, the survey results show a different picture for the development of training programmes for mid-career and senior researchers. According to the survey findings, mainly IPs have supported the development of the training programmes for mid-career and senior researchers (51% of IP respondents either agreed strongly or agreed with this statement), compared with only 15% of STREP respondents who agreed with this statement, or 33% of CA respondents and 35% of NoE respondents who agreed strongly or agreed with this statement.

Figure 14: The FP funded project supported the development of the training programmes for mid-career and senior researchers



(STREP: n=145; SSA: n=20; NoE: n=78; IP: n=102; CA: n=34)

The evidence presented shows that the FP5 and FP6 research programmes in SSH have to a great extent contributed to the development of comparative research in Europe in terms of methodology and infrastructures. The Framework Programmes also supported the development of training programmes, but mainly for junior researchers, less though for mid-career or senior researchers.

Q8: To what extent have the projects supported by FP5 and FP6 under the broader heading “research infrastructures” provided such infrastructures for European researchers outside the consortia?

Projects funded by the SSH programmes in FP5 and FP6 under the heading “research infrastructures” have to a large extent provided identifiable infrastructural resources and/or facilities to European researchers outside the original project consortia, and these have been made use of.

The following two tables give an overview of these projects and the infrastructures they created:

Table 1: “Research Infrastructures” under FP5 Socio-economic Key Action

Project title	Infrastructure created
<p>ESSIE - European Social Survey, Development and First Round</p> <p>MACE - European Social Survey, Round 2 - Monitoring Attitude Change in Europe</p>	<p>Both projects represents the first and the second round of the ESS, which is widely recognised as a successful infrastructure created in the social sciences for the scientific research community and many other stakeholder. The project is included in the ESFRI roadmap which in itself underlines its infrastructural importance and accessibility.</p>

Project title	Infrastructure created
METADATER - Metadata Management and Production System for Empirical Socio-Economic Research	The project provided tools and interfaces to datasets to facilitate comparative research, and was important to infrastructure provision.
MADEIRA - Multilingual Access to Data Infrastructures in the European Research Area	Similar to METADATER, the project provided tools and interfaces to datasets to facilitate comparative research, and was important to infrastructure provision.
CHER - Consortium of Household Panels for European Socio-Economic Research	Important database accessed for comparative research on features of interest to household panels.
EPUNET - European User Network	Important web portal accessed for comparative research on features of interest to household panels.
ECHO - European Cultural Heritage Online	Represents a web-based electronic archive into which many European and other institutions have deposited important archived national artefacts to make them widely available. The project has had an input to the DARIAH infrastructure that is included in the ESFRI roadmap.

Table 2: “Research Infrastructures” under FP6 “Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society”

Project title	Infrastructure created
ESS3 - European Social Survey, Round 3 ESS4 - European Social Survey Round 4 - Improving Social Measurement in Europe	Key elements of the ESS infrastructure (see above).
EUROOCCUPATIONS - Developing a detailed 8-country occupations database for comparative socio-economic research in the European Union.	Provided a useful database for comparative research in the field of occupations available to all.
PROMINSTAT- Promoting comparative quantitative research in the field of migration and integration in Europe	Provides infrastructure access capability for those researching immigration and social cohesion particularly for comparative studies.
MEADOW - Measuring the dynamics of organisations and work: proposed guidelines for collecting and interpreting data on organisational change and its economic and social impacts	Produced a comparative research tool in the area of organisational change.

Both tables show that all “Research Infrastructure” projects have made identifiable infrastructural resources and/or facilities available to European researchers outside the original project consortia.

Q9: Are there potentially important tools / methods / infrastructures (e.g. comparative European data-sets) developed by projects other than those designated as “research infrastructures”?

In FP6, large scale projects were designated as especially important for the development of methods and tools for comparative research and large scale data-sets and other research infrastructures. Table 3 provides an overview.

Table 3: “Large projects”, using IP or NoE instruments, and their outputs generated⁴

Project Name	Output
CHALLENGE	Web-portal of state of the art research activities
WORKS	Digital Toolkit on organisation surveys database and Glossary
LLL2010	European database on lifelong learning policies in 15 old member states and new ones
REFGOV	Framework Database on patent and trademark registrations rates at national and EU levels in selected sectors
INTUNE	Digital Data Library with an archive of data and data documentation
EMILIA	Pan-European data base on lifelong learning and its use to achieve empowerment of mental health service users
ACRE	Digital Data Library section aiming to disseminate studies, with both, qualitative and quantitative information.
EUROSPHERE	Knowledge database allowing storage and analysis of multi-level data
QUING	Database of original texts on gender and equality frames that originate in feminist movements in Europe and database of gender and trainers and training
RECON	Datasets of selected decisions (on the design of Union institutions, and within existing Union institutions)
MICROCON	Database on micro-level conflict processes
FEMCIT	Database composed of sources such as archival material (women’s movement publications, parliamentary records, political party activity, government reports etc)
SHARELIFE	Database of the collected life histories for about 25.000 women and men aged 50 and

⁴ The projects/datasets that were included were based on the information available at the time as input to the inventory. No doubt further evolution has occurred since this was done which could result in additions to what was only intended to be an “overview”.

Project Name	Output
	over in 13 EU countries
KNOWANDPOL	Website to facilitate communications among the researchers participating in the project
MICRO-DYN	Micro-level data set for most European countries with which job and worker flows can be studied and which is comparable between countries in terms of sample size and industry
DIME	Data base on the regional technological specialization of European regions
IMISCOE	Infrastructural platform of state of the art research activities
GARNET	Web-based Information system on regional integration
CINEFOGO	Database of National and Comparative Research
COPECL	Database on case-law in the field of European contract law
RAMSES II	Web based databases with Scientific results and integration tools
EU-CONSENT	Online platform to enhance the dissemination of research results, creating a generic infrastructure for joint dissemination activities across thematically related project
SUS-DIV	Data Platform to map existing databases and provide information on data and metadata
RECWOWE	Database of social security and labour market institutions and reforms
LINEE	Innovative electronic portal to relate the data and information gathered through research

Projects generate active website used by researchers

Most of these projects produced very active websites, providing links to particular datasets. The continued maintenance and updating of the accessible databases created remains a problematic question. There is a danger that some of the databases created for the purpose of achieving a project's objective will eventually decline in quality and so lose relevance.

Nevertheless, important tools and types of infrastructures, such as datasets, portals, or platforms for state of the art research activity, have been developed by SSH large research projects not specifically designated as "research infrastructures". As shown in the table above, there is take-up of these opportunities.

4.4 THE CAREERS OF RESEARCHERS AND HOW THEY MAY BE AFFECTED BY PARTICIPATION IN DIFFERENT PROJECT TYPES

Q10: To what extent have the SSH programmes contributed to the career advancement of participating researchers, and how do those researchers assess the programme's contribution?

Q11: Are there any barriers to researchers' careers that could be addressed by the EU research programmes in the social sciences and humanities?

Both evaluation questions require similar evidence and are therefore answered together. Responding to both questions requires us to take a step back and consider, more holistically, the aggregate effect of the constituent 'contributing elements' described in the section on researcher careers (see Annex 2.4). To what extent has the investment in network-building, internationalisation, skills-enhancement (including publication activity) of participants resulted in their career advancement? For early career researchers this requires us to address whether they have managed to secure a position in research and to assess the quality of those positions including pay, security and the research environment. For mid career researchers we may be more interested in whether it has enabled them to secure promotion perhaps into more secure positions but also whether it has enabled them to become grant-holders and PIs. Finally the study has sought to assess the benefits to senior researchers. Evidence to answer the evaluation questions on researcher careers predominantly stems from the interviews with 25 researchers of different nationalities engaged in projects under the 5th and 6th Framework Programmes, which were undertaken as part of this evaluation.

EU FPs offer career enhancing benefits particularly to early career researchers

Participation in SSH programmes has great benefits for early career researchers. In many cases they believe that it facilitates accelerated career advancement over their peers increasing their access to key networks, their ability to publish and publish in higher quality outlets and alongside prestigious researchers. The networks increase their awareness of employment opportunities and the awareness of senior (employing) researchers of them and their skills. Many felt that their involvement explicitly 'marked' them as international researchers reflecting both their connections and in many cases their direct experience of working in a cross-national and comparative way. The skills in cross national research extend beyond substantive research skills to a wide variety of 'soft' or transferable skills in project management and grant application work. In addition to their international flavour the projects are distinctively inter-disciplinary and high impact. Skills in these areas are beginning to be valued in national systems and will increase the employability and progression of those fortunate to have this kind of experience.

Early career researchers can become too dependent on EU FP funding

Early career researchers often find it difficult to advance to quality positions outwith Framework funding and many become quite dependent upon European funding. The lack of national funding for comparative, inter-disciplinary and policy-relevant social science and humanities research in the Member States makes it hard for these highly trained early career researchers to secure positions. Many have to settle for either more traditional forms of research or for insecure project-funded appointments.

EU FPs facilitate publication activity and opportunities for dissemination particularly for early career researchers

Publications are universally viewed as one of the primary indicators of research excellence. Working collaboratively in international teams involving prestigious and active senior researchers has a considerable effect on early career researchers in stimulating and facilitating publication and dissemination activity. These strong networks play an important role in creating publication opportunities that many early career researchers generally do not have access to. Rather than submitting research papers 'cold' to peer review journals they are often provided with immediate channels for their publication activity – perhaps edited collections or special issues – which gives them access to careful mentoring within the project team. These are unique opportunities which will play a critical role in their career progression.

Mid career researchers are generally less engaged in EU FP SSH projects

There is a general sense that the opportunities for career advancement for mid career researchers are less numerous for a number of reasons. The increasing scale and complexity

of projects and the very competitive nature of the funding system results in a dominance of senior researchers in key coordinating management roles (including project coordinators and work package leaders). On the other hand, the generation of employment opportunities on the projects tends to be at early career level (often for budgetary reasons). As the report has noted networks tend to evolve over time and individuals can grow within the networks (and projects) from early career researchers into quite experienced individuals. Unfortunately the nature of funded research positions can make it very difficult for individuals to progress in this kind of career path into a secure (permanent) position so we do see many very experienced individuals occupying what are in effect insecure early career positions.

Mid career researchers require support to facilitate transition (“step-up”) to senior roles

For mid career researchers to progress they need national systems to enable them to move into more secure positions which in practice often implies a move away from research-only roles into lectureships and this is often a difficult transition. Without this ‘step-up’ it is very hard for individuals to take on senior and management roles or to apply for Framework (or national) funding in their own right. This ‘structural’ problem is well known and continues to restrict the progression of many excellent researchers. Whilst this was a general view, exceptions can be identified of mid career researchers beginning to consider taking on coordinating and leadership roles.

EU FPs contributing to quality and quantity of publications according to senior researchers

Many senior researchers often also identify significant impact in improving both the quality and quantity of publications. The main ‘indicator’ they refer to in this context is the one of international excellence which is generally inferred to equate with peer reviewed journals published in English. Their links with the projects appear to lift them into this distinct area of publication activity. This was particularly true of respondents from the new and less research intense Member States. It is important to remember that this is a proxy for excellence and only begins to assess very specific aspects of ‘quality’. There is a risk in this shift towards ‘international’ publication in English, that the impact of research may be weakened at national and local level – where impact potential is often greatest. It is reassuring to see that most of the respondents that referred to this change in their publication activity simultaneously identified a continued publication presence in outlets in their home language widening the overall impact.

EU FP SSH projects have limited impact on senior researchers careers but crucial for assembling high quality research teams

Many of the senior researchers interviewed were very senior and at a stage in their careers and their life course that meant that their involvement in the SSH programmes had a relatively small impact on their personal career advancement (at least in terms of enabling them to secure a more prestigious position). However it did play an important role in building their international networks and giving them access to a high quality and trusted pool of potential research assistants. Once again there were exceptions with some senior researchers arguing strongly that their involvement in the Framework projects over a number of years had played a major role in supporting their career advancement and developing the specific direction of their research (particularly in international comparative social research).

Senior researchers in the less research-rich countries were more likely to report a positive impact on career development particularly through the impact on their publication activity and networks.

Complex project structures - mixing research disciplines, nations, and researchers at all levels - not always associated with high quality research in the traditional sense

This very positive feedback on the impact on publications needs to be balanced with some concerns that the style of the projects with complex inter-disciplinary, international and mixed

level (in terms of seniority) can, in some contexts, encourage work to be published that does not meet with traditional concepts of 'excellence'. There are two aspects in this. Firstly, concepts of excellence at national level are still intrinsically linked to disciplinary specialisms, and in many respects continue to privilege more theoretical and conceptual work. Specialism lies in constant tension with the quest for more holistic inter and multi-disciplinary work. In the social sciences and humanities, the privileging of theoretical impact also downgrades more empirical and especially policy-oriented contributions. In this sense traditional notions of excellence in publication lie in some tension with the objectives and outputs of the FP programmes. Secondly, the pressure to publish collaboratively in large and complex teams – effectively sharing the intellectual property – can result in joint publications with an 'unevenness' of quality. Weaker material that might be difficult to publish on its own can be 'carried' by the stronger material and the reputations of key players.

Limited value perceived from internal project reporting deliverables

Another issue raised on a regular basis and especially by senior researchers playing a project management role concerned the impact of 'deliverable inflation' on their publication activity. Although people recognised the importance of 'deliverables' from an accounting perspective, there was a general view that they added little to the 'state of the art' in their field and effectively distracted them from more important and higher impact publication activity. Unpublished internal reports such as these play a very minimal role in the CV-building process and consume a significant amount of researcher time. This was seen as a waste in many cases and there was some scepticism about whether anyone at the European Commission actually read and evaluated them.

Skills and confidence gained in grant application process particularly beneficial for mid career researchers

Another important area of impact was the development of skills and confidence in grant application activity. This was frequently identified by respondents many of whom spoke positively of what they had learnt and how it had equipped them to take on the role of work package leader or even coordinator in the future. One respondent suggested that engagement with the schemes 'socialised' researchers into the methods and culture of European funding mechanisms. This is perhaps one of the few areas where impact was highest for mid career researchers seeking to become project leaders for the first time and making a significant career step.

Part-time positions not practical for early career researchers

The final area of impact on 'outcomes' identified in the report concerns the quality of early career positions and the issue of insecurity. Although the integrated projects provide unique employment positions for early career researchers many of which will act as a spring board for future opportunities concern remains about the temporary and on occasion part-time quality of positions. The concerns about part-time work were expressed by respondents who needed to work full-time. It is important to emphasise that part-time research, in itself, is not a problem and may provide an important solution to the work-life-balance dilemma. Part-time work is, however, unlikely to support the level of remuneration required by young people moving to another country to take up work.

The biggest concern is with temporary and short term work and the extent to which this kind of insecurity is tending to extend deeper into the life course of early career researchers many of whom are only 'early career' because they have not managed to secure a more permanent position. The concept of early career does not equate in any direct or uniform sense to levels of expertise or experience. These are complex issues which pervade current discussions at European and Member State level and cannot begin to be resolved within the frame of the FP programme.

EU FPs have stimulated engagement with Policy Makers

Researchers in the FP programmes are encouraged to engage directly with policy makers and the users of research. The findings indicate that this is genuinely occurring and that the impact of the scheme in this area is really very marked. Many projects have been explicitly designed to engage directly with the thematic priorities and European policy agenda. As such they have built in mechanisms to promote policy engagement activity. The majority of respondents were able to immediately identify mechanisms and concrete outcomes in the area of policy engagement. Early career researchers and those more senior researchers from the new Member States in particular gained important skills and experience and were more highly motivated to engage in this type of activity in the future. There was one very positive suggestion that the FP project with its emphasis on policy had begun to change the national culture (in Poland) and encourage a more effective research/policy interface.

One of the key problems seen by researchers is the unwillingness of policy-makers to come to the table and understand the relevance of research. The challenge for researchers is to ensure that they project the right level of information at the most appropriate policy-making communities.

From a career perspective it is also important to note that FP projects and their objectives in this area still lie outwith formal assessment and performance management criteria at national level (although that is beginning to change). In practice this means that, from a career perspective, there is a lack of incentives to engage in this type of activity and researchers often participate in the knowledge that the time they commit to it will not be directly rewarded.

Q12: How are the SSH programme's contributions to inter-institutional and international mobility evaluated by participating researchers?

Majority of researchers at all levels engaged in fluid and highly significant forms of mobility

From the perspective of geographical or international mobility the interviews revealed the complexity of contemporary researcher mobility patterns. The majority of researchers at all career levels are engaging in fluid and highly significant forms of mobility.

Longer term mobility likely to occur where a physical post is generated from project

Only a very small number of respondents had exercised the longer term forms of mobility (perhaps better referred to as 'migrations') which involve relocating to another Member State for a period of employment or scholarship. This type of mobility is more likely to take place within the integrated projects which generate employment positions in the traditional sense although there was evidence that the NoEs also resulted in staff exchanges and (unpaid) fellowships.

These forms of mobility play an important role in helping especially early career researchers to secure positions and often better quality positions or positions in their chosen specialism as part of the employment search process. They have an indirect effect of generating mobility capital which then often encourages future moves. However, the attractiveness of this form of mobility often wanes over time as researchers' lives evolve and they begin to form relationships and form families.

EU FP projects (particularly NoEs) effective at facilitating fluid and ongoing mobility

Whilst the minority of the sample used for this evaluation have engaged in the kinds of mobility described above, the overwhelming majority have been actively involved in more fluid and ongoing forms of movement and international engagement that have played a critical role in building relationships, supporting publication and dissemination activities and more generally increasing the quality of European cross-national research in the SSH field. It is this kind of

mobility and its relationship with wider processes of internationalisation (and Europeanisation) that is a unique impact of the scheme. Existing funding mechanisms at national level provide only limited opportunities for this kind of activity and where funding is available it will often support one-off initiatives. The FP projects, and particularly the NoEs, play a distinctive role in building meaningful international relationships within Europe and with partners in third countries.

EU FP projects create additional opportunities particularly for early career researchers

A direct impact on mobility can be seen in the job search behaviour of early career researchers in particular; involvement in the programme opens up, both from a psychological perspective and in real terms, the potential for a wider approach to job search both within the large projects themselves and via extended networks and relationships. This form of mobility (moving to secure positions abroad) is viewed in both positive and negative terms. On the one hand it increases the range of scientific and cultural opportunities (a pull or choice factor); on the other hand it reflects the limited nature of opportunity in the home context (a push/constraint factor).

EU FPs enabling participation at international conferences, dissemination and training events deemed particularly valuable

Some of the forms of travel and interaction are more highly valued than others. Support to attend international conferences and dissemination and training events was widely acknowledged as was the opportunity for genuine, in-depth, engagement with research partners on conceptual and methodological matters. This often takes place within work packages with smaller teams of specialists. Some concern was expressed about the returns (both in terms of travel and researcher time) on some of the project meetings and very large, project-level, events where establishing a common sense of purpose and interest was sometimes more difficult to achieve.

There was also a sense that the projects were overly prescribed at the outset, leaving little room for flexibility in the allocation of resources, in this case for international travel and for a more reflexive and responsive research process. This could be achieved without sacrificing the commitment to accountability.

Mobility from EU FPs appreciated but sometimes to the detriment of work-life balance

Whilst the opportunities to travel and operate in a more international fashion were very much appreciated, there was some concern that the demands on participants in some projects to travel on a regular and quite demanding scale posed serious problems for people with families struggling to achieve an effective work-life-balance whilst working on one of the Framework projects. Many respondents felt that there was an irrevocable tension between the demands of the project on their time (and the proportion of their time they had to spend away from home) and their personal / family responsibilities. This view was shared by both men and women. Similar concerns were also expressed by a number of respondents who had long term debilitating illnesses but were nevertheless working full-time. The requirement to travel in order to participate on an equal basis posed serious challenges to this group.

Long and short term mobility from EU FPs play significant role in evolving and maturing networks

The combination of these longer term moves and on-going project-related mobilities play an important role in stimulating and re-invigorating networks. Applications to the Framework Programmes are typically based on strong pre-existing networks. In many cases these are the result of previous EU funding but in other cases represent the effective institutionalisation of previously informal and often under-resourced professional networks. In that respect the scheme does not so much precipitate the development of entirely or even predominantly new networks but augments and extends previous relationships. It plays a particularly powerful role in shaping the international quality of professional networks enabling them to draw in partners

from other countries and particularly the new Member States. Although some cynicism is evident in the discussions about the politics of European network formation processes requiring coordinators to carefully select what they believe to be strategic partnerships to satisfy the Commission's selection panels, the pressure on projects to reach out to new partners is having an effect in terms of building the European research community.

Senior researchers (particularly in the IPs) are careful to balance the risks associated with new and un-tested partnerships with the demands of the research project. Although some of these relationships will fail and pose administrative problems for coordinators, some of them will result in a strengthening of networks as the individuals concerned become an integral part of the core team.

This was the case with several partners from the new and less research intense Member States (such as Slovenia, Poland and Portugal for example) where networks strengthened to the extent that there was a real appetite for some of these organisations to take on a coordination role in the future.

EU FP support for networking activities has significant impact on early career researchers

The support for networking activities has a huge impact on the early career researchers involved. The projects provide unique and valuable opportunities for early career researchers to meet with and be carefully guided by senior specialists from other countries, disciplines and institutions. The interviews suggest that the FP projects have a particular culture that is less hierarchical than many national contexts and genuinely support the growth of active and mutually productive relationship between senior, mid and early career researchers. The networks of excellence play a very strong role in this respect encouraging widespread and active network-building. They are less affected by the concerns expressed above about the 'risks' of bringing in new people in heavily scheduled research projects.

The scale of this networking activity is conducive to the formation of initial relationships especially for early career researchers or more senior researchers in contexts that are less internationally oriented. They have the potential to spark new relationships. Some of these will blossom over time as people begin to work together in a more focused and intense manner. Of course many of the relationships will remain relatively 'shallow' and will wane over time if other opportunities do not arise to maintain them. Equally, in these types of project, explicitly focused on network building rather than research outputs, it is unsurprising that questions are raised about the quality of all parties concerned.

Both types of projects, but more especially the network projects, play an important role in building networks within the body of early career researchers – so forms of peer engagement and support. These are valued very highly amongst early career researchers.

5.0 Summary

This study has assessed how the Social Sciences and Humanities elements of the Framework Programme have contributed to the European Research Area (ERA).

The findings of this evaluation have shown that in the field of SSH research policy making, the FP SSH programmes have had a limited impact on national programmes, and that national SSH research policy is still mainly driven by domestic agendas. Several factors, based on national priorities and needs, differentiate national responses to SSH research strategies and funding due to different funding systems across EU Member States.

Nevertheless, the programme has encouraged more interaction between researchers and policy-makers. Additionally, international mobility is seen at national level as increasingly important, and actions have been taken to ensure bi- and multilateral SSH research collaboration and researcher exchanges. These actions have a high impact on researchers and their careers and make the researchers' mobility issue a matter of concern to national policy makers.

The large instruments, which were intended to overcome the fragmentation within European research by involving European researchers in large scale, network based research, have provided important benefits for the creation of the ERA. This evaluation found that the large instruments have improved the state-of-the-art in SSH research and the creation of a community of European researchers in SSH. They have also led to the development of European data-sets and shared methodologies. In addition, they have increased the career opportunities for early career researchers. Thus, the large instruments have made important contributions to the creation of the ERA.

However, the large instruments also require a lot of project management and administration work, which often pose a challenge for coordinators and research institutions. Moreover, the findings of this evaluation have shown that relationships developed during a project cycle might dissolve in the absence of Commission funding. Thus, the continuation of these contacts seems to be dependent on longer-term support by the Commission.

This evaluation has also shown that the research infrastructures in SSH play an important structuring role for the SSH research community in terms of making available high quality data to the research community for comparative research, and to develop shared tools and methodologies for SSH research. Some of these data sets have been made available to external parties not involved in the original research consortium, such as the research community and broader society. This "outreach" makes these infrastructures functioning as information hubs around which future research directions and projects can be structured. In the future, the external access to data-sets and infrastructures should be further encouraged to enable researchers to make use of subsequent research work.

Finally, the evaluation also found that the SSH programmes have influenced the career advancement of participating researchers, especially those at the early stages of their careers. However, the FP SSH projects seem to have less impact on mid-career and senior researchers. Participation in the SSH programmes has provided researchers with the opportunity to network, publish research findings, attend conferences, and has given them exposure to researchers at different research levels.

More detailed evaluation findings can be found in the Annex.

Annex
Study Findings

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RESEARCH POLICY-MAKING IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Introduction

The following section attempts to address the impact of the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) elements of the EU Framework Programmes (FPs) on policies for SSH at national level. The assessment focused mainly on input from:

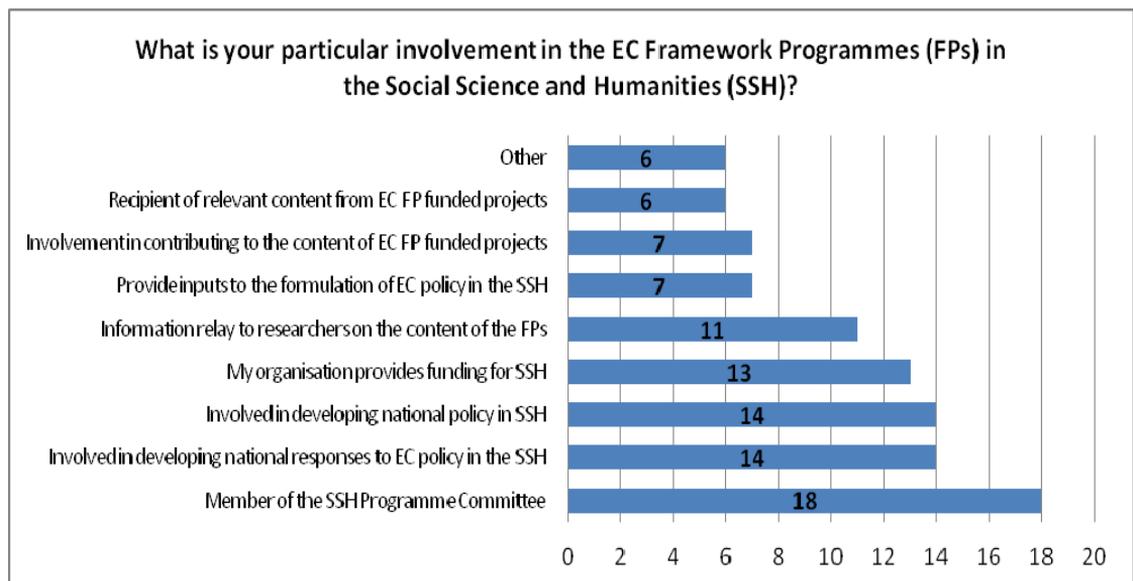
- Officials responsible for policy development in the field of SSH in their respective countries; and,
- Coordinators and work package leaders of FP5 and FP6 projects.

A contact database of about 100 national policy makers in 36 countries was established including people in charge of SSH departments in Science Ministries and Research Councils or equivalent organizations, as well as people who represent the Countries in the Programme Management Committees of the EU SSH programmes.

Those policy-makers were sent an email inviting them to complete an online survey on 16th July 2009 and remained online for three months in order to allow sufficient time to collect responses. Reminder emails were sent to national policy makers who did not respond initially and subsequently many of these officials were also reminded by telephone to bolster the response rate.

42 people responded to the online consultation. The following graph gives an overview of the profile of respondents in terms of their involvement in the EC Framework Programmes in SSH. Most respondents were Members of the SSH Programme Committee (18), involved in developing national responses to EC policy in the SSH (14), as well as involved in developing national policy in SSH (14).

Figure 15: Online consultation: What is your particular involvement in the EC Framework Programmes in the Social Science and Humanities – Respondents were able to tick as many options as applied



n=35

In a next step, a total of 34 interviews were carried out with policy makers in 22 EU Member States (30 by telephone and 4 face to face). No interviews could be secured for France, Spain, Italy and Latvia despite repeated efforts by the evaluators to contact policy makers in these countries.

Based on the interviews and the online consultation as well as desk research, this part presents the findings of the study that relate to the evaluation questions.

Challenges / Limitations of the Study

- While the response rate to the online consultation was relatively high, no responses were received from policy makers in Belgium, France, Italy and Poland despite repeated efforts of the evaluation team (by email and telephone). The lack of responses from these countries was flagged to DG Research early on, and efforts were made by the desk officer to encourage policy makers to reply to the consultation invitation.
- While a total of 34 interviews were carried out with policy makers in 22 EU Member States, no interviews could be conducted with policy makers in Finland, Latvia, France, Spain and Italy, despite repeated efforts by the evaluators to encourage policy makers to participate.
- While there could be several reasons behind the generally low levels of interest shown by policy makers in certain Member States to participate in this evaluation, one key point should be mentioned. The fact that there seems to be a limited amount of data on SSH research would in certain instances explain why policy makers have little to say on the subject. This is consistent with a conclusion of the METRIS report *“Emerging Trends in Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities in Europe”* that *“data available on SSH research does not allow for a specific or longitudinal analysis of current trends at the European level. Although funding and staffing patterns do not explain everything, the fragmentary character of the available data is the first impediment to a proper understanding of the evolving role of SSH in society”*.

Background to policy-making in SSH in Europe

Increasing importance of SSH research perceived across European Member States

Policy makers in all 23 countries where interviews were conducted agreed that SSH are of growing importance across the European Union. This perception is underlined by growing research budgets for SSH as well as an increasing participation of Member States in SSH projects under FP5 and FP6 (see chapter below). However, the perceived importance of SSH research remains significantly lower than for research in the natural sciences. In Eastern European countries, in particular, there is a perception of lagging behind in the development of research capacity, especially in some of the SSH disciplines, i.e. political science, sociology and economics and resources and time are needed to further the development of research capacities and research infrastructures. Eastern European research systems are still undergoing significant reforms after the decline of their communist regimes. Many areas are relatively new and still under-developed.

Mixed allocation of public SSH research funding

Public funding has been the main source of the development of the SSH research in all EU Member States. Data available in EUROSTAT show that the government and the higher education sectors are the main sources of SSH research financing in almost all EU Member

States. Only in Latvia and Portugal, there is a significant reporting of SSH expenditure by the business enterprise sector.⁵

The following table provides an overview of the expenditures for SSH research by government sector for the period 1998 to 2008:

Table 4: Total intramural R&D expenditure (GERD) by government sector and SSH (in Million EUR)

Country	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Austria	78.076	:	:	:	100.691	:	96.54	:	111.812	119.425	:
Belgium	:	18.39	24.88	26.545	35.226	35.541	37.072	37.464	:	:	:
Bulgaria	:	:	5.083	4.833	6.212	7.157	7.831	8.531	9.125	9.718	:
Cyprus	:	:	:	2.431	2.748	3.051	3.137	2.902	3.618	3.591	:
Czech Republic	16.489	19.48	20.613	26.224	27.526	30.101	32.961	39.821	49.146	52.05	73.247
Denmark	:	68.59	56.213	59.104	62.445	47.024	44.744	55.695	74.419	57.016	:
Estonia	:	:	:	2.269	3.764	4.154	4.474	4.116	5.496	5.171	6.295
Finland	55.712	58.193	57.3	61.99	68.1	63.5	70.7	72.3	83.4	75.399	:
France	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Germany	784.715	800.27	858.7	864.4	924.1	954.5	957.6	999.8	1088.65	1088.53	:
Greece	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Hungary	19.881	22.795	24.466	32.249	45.237	50.934	53.816	61.644	57.341	49.925	:
Ireland	:	:	:	:	20	20	17.3	19.1	22.4	14	:
Italy	:	:	:	:	:	383	442	400.7	434.8	:	:
Latvia	:	:	1.021	1.594	1.382	1.082	1.457	2.038	1.149	1.218	:
Lithuania	:	:	:	6.091	7.285	6.43	7.211	9.731	10.571	10.282	:
Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)	:	:	5.8	8.9	9.2	10.7	:	10.8	:	:	:
Malta	:	:	:	:	0.734	:	0.418	0.658	0.494	0.396	0.287
Netherlands	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	207	:
Poland	18.844	21.313	26.62	29.166	27.039	:	33.092	41.362	42.506	43.246	:
Portugal	17.951	22.46	25.505	28.547	25.533	22.519	22.861	23.203	26.09	28.978	:
Romania	4.138	2.881	4.745	6.509	8.224	7.481	7.582	12.277	14.852	24.54	:
Slovakia	6.272	7.343	5.634	6.005	6.886	9.207	9.22	10	9.975	13.862	17.668
Slovenia	18.613	21.741	21.48	23.071	23.015	7.251	7.762	22.829	30.694	32.583	:
Spain	43.856	48.153	54.2	60.952	60.784	103.457	117.275	143.963	180.5	209.142	:
Sweden	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
United Kingdom	:	:	:	:	112.431	166.476	177.703	157.795	160.327	:	:

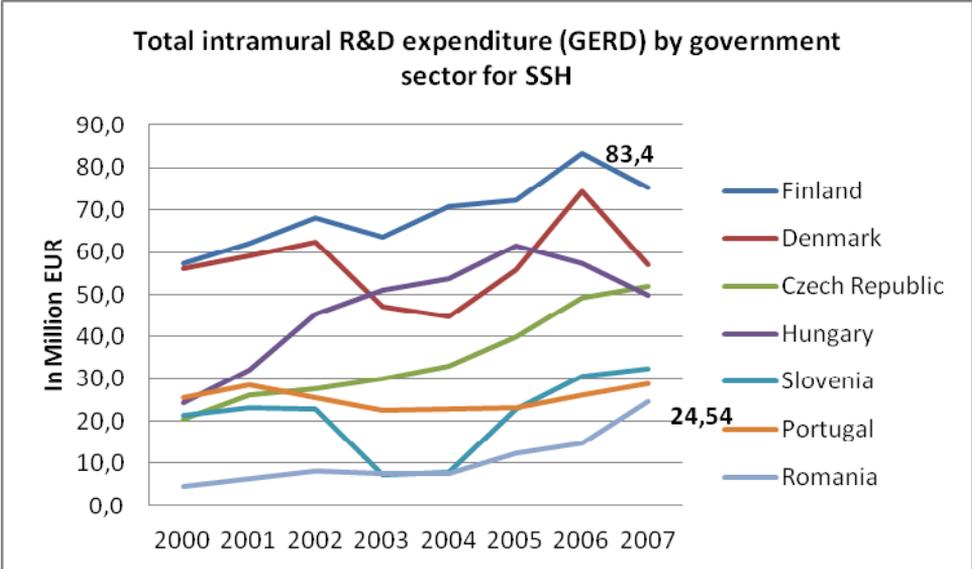
Source: Eurostat

⁵ Note that SSH data are scarce for France, the UK and Italy.

There is no comprehensive data available for the UK, and no data at all for France, arguably two of the highest R&D spending countries in Europe. Overall, the table shows that, with the exception of Denmark, SSH government expenditure has grown in most countries over the last 10 years and in some cases quite significantly.

The graph below illustrates the development of government expenditure between 2000 and 2008 for those countries where the data was consistently available for this time period.

Figure 16: Total intramural expenditure (GERD) by government sector for SSH



Source: Eurostat - Please note that government expenditure in Germany and Spain was significantly higher than for those countries displayed in the graph.

The following table provides an overview of the expenditures for SSH research by higher education sector over time:

Table 5: Total intramural R&D expenditure (GERD) by higher education sector and SSH (in Million EUR)

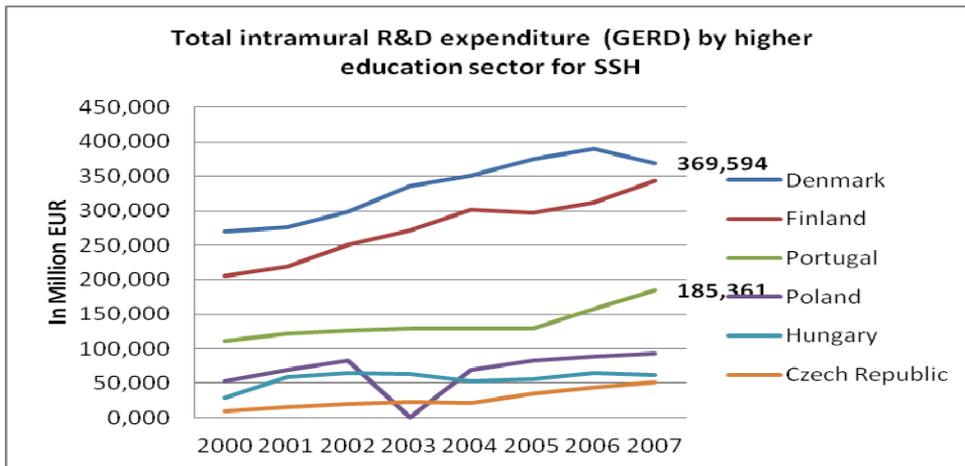
Country/	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Austria	232.932	:	:	:	301.813	:	320.579	:	360.917	393.446	:
Belgium	:	:	231.14	249.651	281.046	292.346	296.465	305.225	:	:	:
Bulgaria	:	:	1.354	1.319	1.476	1.07	1.274	2.792	2.523	3.041	:
Cyprus	:	:	:	3.91	5.032	6.672	7.358	9.063	10.087	12.178	:
Czech Republic	4.741	6.919	9.416	16.097	19.9	22.67	22.09	35.43	43.902	50.775	52.871
Denmark	:	235.626	269.661	276.49	299.199	336.154	351.593	374.65	389.236	369.594	:
Estonia	:	:	:	4.691	5.132	6.161	7.216	8.456	9.83	13.978	17.512
Finland	177.25	201.968	205.613	218.546	250.439	271.748	301.172	296.878	311.3	342.848	:
France	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Germany	1646.872	1631.02	1709.3	1779.8	1883.5	1881.5	1914.44	1978.6	1999.074	2153.023	:
Greece	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Hungary	15.353	15.242	28.388	58.587	65.281	62.872	53.626	56.457	64.69	61.779	:
Ireland	57.096	:	:	81.15	93.3	99.4	120.8	139	131.5	:	:
Italy	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	1591.7	1720.9	:	:
Latvia	:	:	2.316	2.559	2.213	2.426	2.456	4.364	9.193	14.051	:
Lithuania	:	:	:	8.042	13.297	15.177	22.966	25.168	27.224	36.289	:
Luxembourg (Grand-Duché)	:	:	0.65	0.945	:	:	:	2.7	:	:	:
Malta	:	:	:	:	:	:	3.677	3.919	4.16	4.865	4.61
Netherlands	437.83	467	475	516	585	:	:	:	:	:	:
Poland	54.258	48.304	53.565	69.443	83.087	:	68.967	82.252	88.375	93.811	:
Portugal	83.873	100.31	110.963	121.615	125.821	130.027	129.41	128.793	157.077	185.361	:
Romania	1.982	0.414	5.01	0.855	1.862	2.397	3.454	8.57	21.694	8.164	:
Slovakia	2.049	1.881	2.042	2.148	1.312	2.386	5.147	6.218	10.265	12.53	14.766
Slovenia	8.33	8.582	10.179	11.154	11.893	7.062	8.159	12.533	13.626	13.346	:
Spain	315.966	331.975	360.1	408.657	467.86	926.62	999.552	1133.333	1205.467	1339.005	:
Sweden	:	333.579	:	382.06	:	444.642	:	451.833	445.393	:	:
United Kingdom	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Source: Eurostat

Similarly to SSH in government expenditure on SSH in the field of higher education has been increasing over the last decade across all countries. No data was available for France, the UK and Greece.

The graph below shows the development of higher education expenditure between 2000 and 2008 for those countries where data is consistently available for this time period.

Figure 17: Total intramural R&D expenditure (GERD) by higher education sector for SSH



Source: Eurostat – As above, please note that government expenditure in Germany and Spain was significantly higher than for those countries displayed in the graph.

The Appendices (Section 10) provide a table giving an overview of SSH expenditure per funding sector in 2007. The data available show that the governmental as well as the higher education sector are the main sources of SSH research financing in almost all EU Member States. Exceptions seem to be Latvia and Portugal, which both show a high share of SSH expenditure by the business enterprise sector.

Different funding systems across EU Member States

The funding systems in all Member States are generally divided into:

- Institutional funding: Funding for universities
- Individual funding: Individual grants for researchers
- Programme funding: Funding of targeted projects based on a proposal
- Private funding: Business enterprise expenditure on SSH
- European and international funding: Funding received from European and/or international funding organisations

Institutional funding plays the most significant role in supporting SSH research

Institutional funding plays the most significant role in all EU Member States.⁶ Differentiations can be made between thematic and non-thematic funding. Non-thematic funding, meaning that funding is allocated directly to institutions and they take the decision on how it is allocated, is the most common element of SSH funding in EU Member States.

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/metris-report_en.pdf, p. 24

Individual funding provided by Academies of Science or Research and Science Funds

Individual SSH funding is less common than institutional funding. However, information collected during the interviews with policy makers suggests that individual funding for SSH research is available in most EU Member States although the funding is reportedly limited in Greece, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. The funding is mainly allocated by Academies of Science, Research/Science Funds and Foundations or Research Councils, depending on the research entities and structures that operate in each Member State. In Hungary, however, individual SSH funding is restricted to funding of the 25 universities affiliated research groups of the Hungarian Academy of Science. In the UK, individual researchers and research teams receive funding either in the form of funding allocated within the Higher Education Institutions at the discretion of those institutions, or as competitive research grants awarded by the Research Councils.

Programme funding forms an important element for SSH research

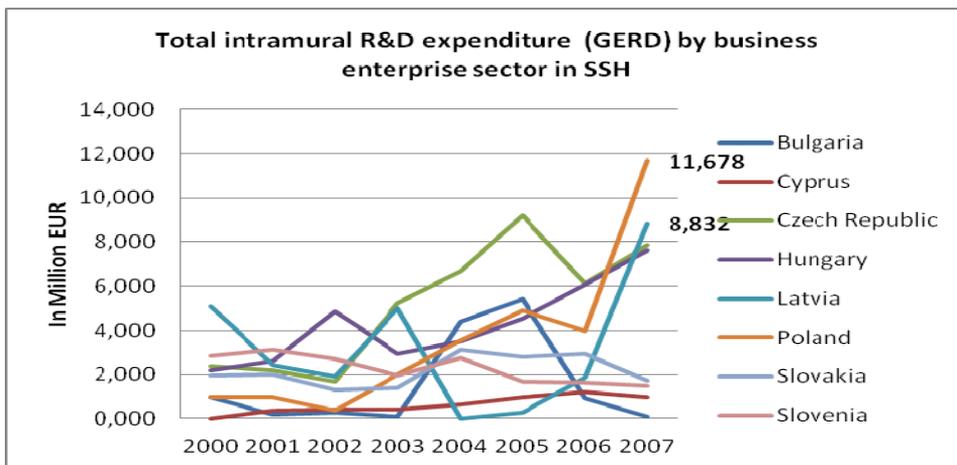
Programme funding is an important means for SSH research in all EU Member States, with the exception of Poland, Portugal and Slovakia, where no programme funding for SSH is available. It is not possible to quantify the amount spent on programme funding for each EU Member State, as the allocations vary depending on the number of programmes in each country.

Low levels of private sector research funding

Information available for private sector research funding across the EU Member States is scarce. Evidence stemming from the information from the final METRIS report suggests that *private sector contributions* are minimal and in many cases non-existent across the EU.⁷ Similar impressions were generated from the interviews and responses to the questionnaire in this study. While information on private sector research funding in SSH is scarce, some data is available on R&D expenditure for the business enterprise sector in SSH.

The graph below illustrates the business enterprise expenditure on SSH for the period 2000-2007 for Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Figure 18: Total intramural R&D expenditure (GERD) for business enterprise sector in SSH



Source: Eurostat – Please note that there was no data available for the UK, Germany or France for the entire time period.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/metriz-report_en.pdf, p. 24

As illustrated in the graph above, there seems to be an increase in R&D expenditure by business enterprise sector in SSH. This is particularly the case in Poland, Latvia, Czech Republic and Hungary.

EU Framework Programmes are the most significant funding sources (outside domestic funding)

Desk research indicated that funding through the EU FPs plays the most significant part in supporting research (including SSH research) outside domestic funding. For example, data collected for research funding in Greece⁸ shows that the main non-national funding source for the country is the FP with total funding from it accounting for 8 to 10% of Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) – please note there is no data available on what proportion of this funding is related to SSH. The same level of importance of the FP for national research is reported for Hungary and Poland, though again, no exact data is available for the SSH research element.

SSH research funding from Charity / Foundation sector is limited

Across all EU Member States, only interviewees in the UK and in Germany stated that charities and foundations are important providers of research funding in SSH. For example, the Leverhulme (<http://www.leverhulme.org.uk/>) and Rowntree foundations (<http://www.jrf.org.uk/>) in the UK and the Volkswagen Stiftung (<http://www.volkswagen-stiftung.de/>) in Germany support SSH research projects that are relevant and coincide with their objectives and priorities. In addition, foundations are also important for SSH financing in Hungary. Nearly all research institutes have their own foundations since this type of financing is exempt from tax. In Ireland, foundations and not-for-profit funding have played a prominent role in the development of SSH research activities. The Atlantic Philanthropies, Irish Life, a major private sector life assurance company, as well as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation are just examples of foundations funding individual SSH research projects carried out by Irish research teams. Private research foundations for SSH vary a quite lot between Member States and on the whole they are considered less important for SSH in Europe than they are in the US.

Research Councils (or similar) exist in the majority of Member States and these tend to have an SSH component (e.g. an SSH Committee)

The majority of European Member States have a research council type of organisation, or a formalised system of research funding. While evidence collected during the interviews suggests that the majority of countries do not have special bodies and/or advisory organisations dedicated to SSH only, there is often an SSH component of the wider research council.

In Eastern European Member States, the old and traditional science academies have continued to be influential since the political changes of 1989. This is reportedly the case in Lithuania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland. However, the hierarchical nature of some of the traditional public academic and research institutions, coupled with low salaries and poor working conditions for researchers, has contributed to a brain drain in some of these countries, presenting even more challenges to the traditional institutions. For example, one policy maker in Lithuania stated that:

“Academic careers are poorly paid and it is difficult to recruit people. Lithuania is affected by the brain drain. I knew several young researchers for several years and then they went abroad. In some cases they have reached high positions in the US”.

⁸ ERAWATCH country report Greece:

<http://cordis.europa.eu/erawatch/index.cfm?fuseaction=ri.content&topicID=51&parentID=50&countryCode=GR>

These findings are consistent with the claim of the METRIS report that in terms of research expenditure and in terms of the number of researchers, the social sciences and humanities in the EU-27 are mostly located within the higher education system (although some countries have important public research administrations / academies that are separate from universities).

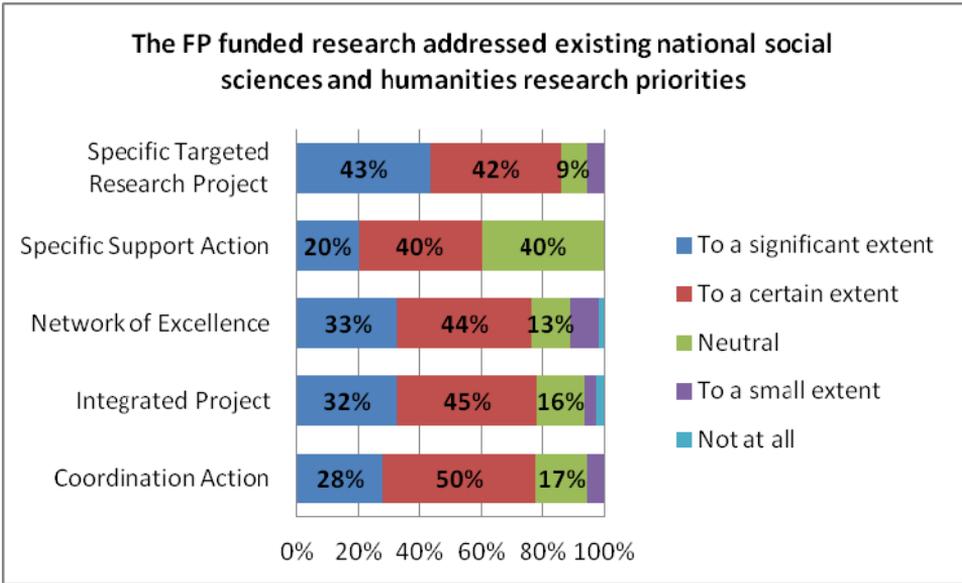
National thematic objectives for SSH not set in all Member States

During the interviews, policy makers from seven countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, The Netherlands and Romania) reported that thematic priorities for SSH were set at national level, i.e. as part of governmental programmes.

In addition, policy makers reported that no (clear) national SSH thematic objectives were set in the Czech Republic and Ireland. The problem in these Member States seems to be that SSH is not seen as one of the national research priority areas and no clear SSH strategy exists which would inform the definition of thematic objectives in SSH. According to interviews with policy makers in Portugal, the general approach here is to award SSH funding based on research excellence, rather than according to particular thematic research objectives. Overall though, this domain seems to be one of considerable uncertainty.

In this context, results from the survey with coordinators and work package leaders show that the majority of respondents believed that the Framework Programme addressed existing national social sciences and humanities research priorities. For example, 43% of STREP respondents believed this to be the case to a significant extent and 42% to a certain extent. A third of respondents from the NoEs and IPs claimed this to be the case to a significant extent and circa 45% to a certain extent.

Figure 19: FP funded research addressed existing national SSH research priorities



(STREP: n=92; SSA: n=10; NoE: n=55; IP: n=77; CA: n=18)

Key findings:

- Public funding constitutes the main source of funding for SSH research across Europe, while private sector contributions are marginal.

- While the majority of EU Member States have research councils with an SSH components, very few have a body specifically dedicated to the SSH.
- Not all EU Member States seem to have set national thematic priorities for SSH.

5.1.1 National support for SSH research collaboration within the European Research Area

International mobility seen as increasingly important

International mobility was seen by all policy makers interviewed as a key factor in the latest research policy developments. The “internationalisation” of research and researchers was perceived as very important and becoming a priority area in recent years. Therefore, most EU Member States have established bi- or multilateral research collaboration with other countries (in Europe and worldwide). Policy makers in Germany, for example, reported that the Ministry of Education and Research has developed an internationalisation strategy to lay the ground for improving international research collaboration with scientifically leading countries and to make use of potentials for innovation internationally. While much collaboration serves bilateral purposes, it still can be considered as a good foundation on which to base future EU level collaboration.

Bi- and multilateral SSH research collaboration and researcher exchanges increasing

With regard to SSH research, policy makers in Estonia, Sweden and Ireland reported that researchers in social sciences in their countries collaborate more than researchers in the humanities. Research in the humanities was perceived as having a national focus, and collaboration with researchers abroad is, if at all, only carried out with those in neighbouring countries.

Bi- and multilateral cooperation not only includes researchers working on projects together, but also the exchange of researchers between countries. The increased exchange of researchers between countries was highlighted by policy makers in Greece, Cyprus, Belgium and Luxembourg. Policy makers in Greece and Estonia also stated that collaboration mainly takes place with regional partners and/or researchers in neighbouring countries

Examples of bilateral and multilateral SSH cooperation arrangements across all 27 EU Member States are summarised in a table in the Appendices (Section 11). The information has been obtained through a mixture of input from interviews with national policy makers and extensive desk research. No information was found for Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta. It is worth noting that the information presented in the table is for illustrative purposes and that the list of arrangements and participating institutions is not exhaustive.

Overall, almost all Member States for which information was available have developed bilateral and multilateral partnerships with research institutions, government authorities and/or universities abroad. Bi- and multilateral cooperation arrangements are usually the responsibility of national government authorities or public institutions such as national Academies of Science and Arts. Generally, no single institution is responsible exclusively for the promotion and implementation of partnerships. The number and type of SSH research cooperation arrangements differ a lot from one country to another so no typical pattern can be identified. However, it is worth noting that old Member States have a longer history of developing these types of partnerships and have links with a broad range of third-countries. Some countries such as Austria and the UK are part of international organisations (e.g. the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis based in Austria and the International Social Science Council based in the UNESCO House in France). On the other hand, Member States with strong historical links with other countries in the world have developed multiple partnerships and cooperation agreements to promote joint research in areas that interest both

parties. This is the case with Spain and almost all countries in Latin America, Portugal, Brazil, and with the UK that has particularly strong links with the US and Canada. Among old Member States it is worth highlighting the importance given to arrangements with the US, Japan, China, India, and to a slightly lesser extent Brazil.

The Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway) have developed a network for research collaboration (including research in the fields of humanities and the social sciences) between their National Research Councils. This network constitutes their main channel for international research collaboration aside from at the European level.

New Member States have already developed several cooperation arrangements with a focus on other Member States (e.g. the Czech Republic and Hungary with France, Germany and the UK or Slovakia with bilateral cooperation arrangements involving SSH research with 10 EU Member States), other European countries (particularly Russia) and third countries such as China.

As regards cooperation between universities, circa half of the Member States included in the table have developed some sort of arrangement to promote the exchange of students and researchers.

Public sector funding for collaborative research

Interviews with national policy makers suggest that funding for collaborative research with institutions in other countries exists in the majority of EU Member States. The majority of this funding comes from the public sector and there is very limited information available on private sector funding. However, policy makers in Ireland, Lithuania and Slovenia stated that national funding for international activities is limited. Although private foundations provide some funding in Ireland, financial contributions from the European Commission are reportedly the main source of funding for the SSH research scene in these three countries.

Involvement in SSH elements of the FP (FP5 and FP6)

Increasing participation across all MSs in SSH Thematic Programmes (FP5 and FP6)

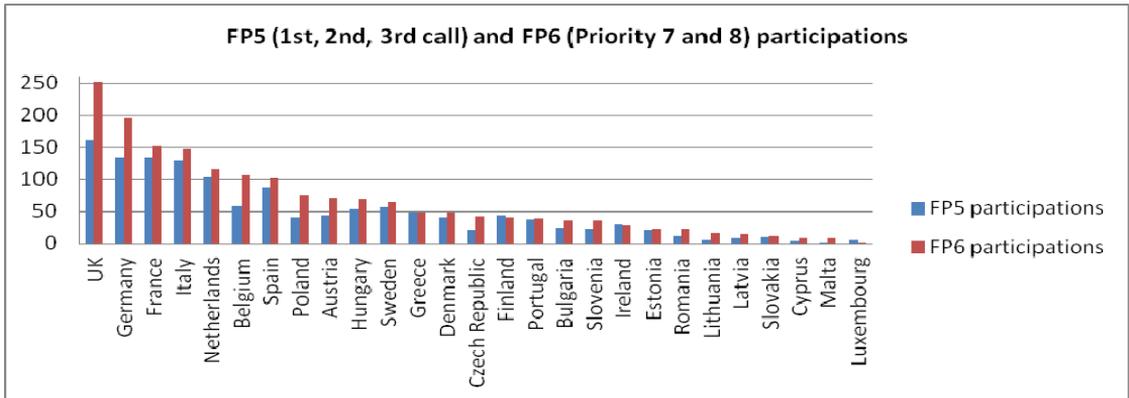
There are two tables in the Appendices (Section 12) which provide an overview of the participation of all European Member States in the SSH Thematic Programme for FP5 and FP6, split by participation in projects under the individual Framework Programmes (FP5 and FP6), the different calls and priorities (1st, 2nd and 3rd call under FP5; Priority 7 and 8 under FP6), and by coordination of projects. Originally, policy makers were asked to provide information on the participation of their countries in SSH-related projects under FP5 and FP6. However, little information was made available. Therefore, the data shown in the tables was collected by analysing the information available for each project under FP5 and FP6 on the relevant CORDIS websites.

EU Member States with the largest national SSH funding had the highest number of participations in the SSH FPs

The data in the tables in the Appendices show that the UK, France and Germany had the highest number of participations in SSH-related projects under FP5 (1st, 2nd and 3rd calls) and FP6 (Priority 7 and 8). The three front runners were closely followed by Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Belgium. Countries with the least participation in SSH-related projects under FP5 and FP6 were Luxembourg, Cyprus and Malta.

The graph below give a summary overview of the total number of participations in SSH-related projects under FP5 (1st, 2nd and 3rd call) and FP6 (Priority 7 and 8) for all EU-Member States:

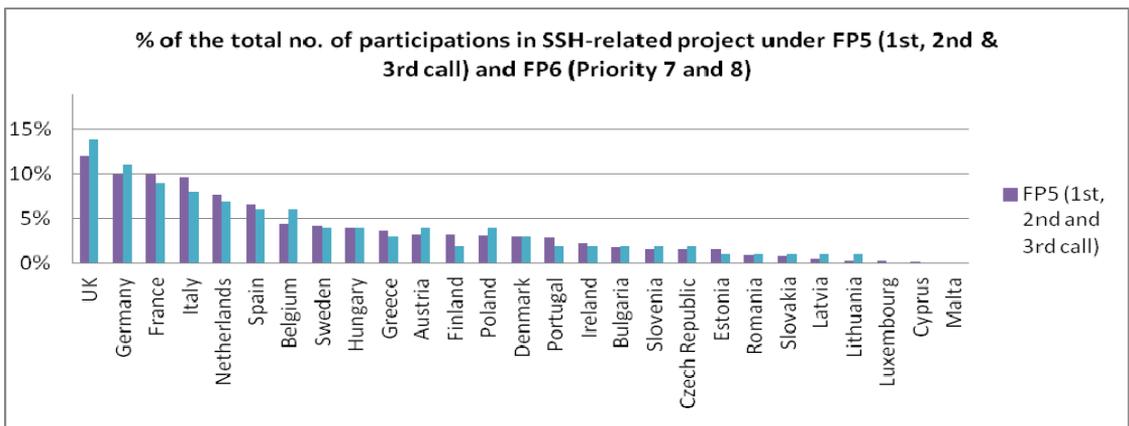
Figure 20: Total number of SSH-related participations under FP5 (1st, 2nd, 3rd call) and FP6 (Priority 7 and 8)



Source: Data constructed from EC publications on the CORDIS website

In terms of the proportion of the total number of SSH-related projects under FP5 and FP6, the two tables below show that the UK and Germany had a slight increase, while France, Italy and the Netherlands had a slight decrease of overall participations in SSH-related projects from FP5 to FP6.

Figure 21: % of total no. of participations in SSH related projects under FP5 (1st, 2nd and rd call) and FP6 Priority 7 and 8)



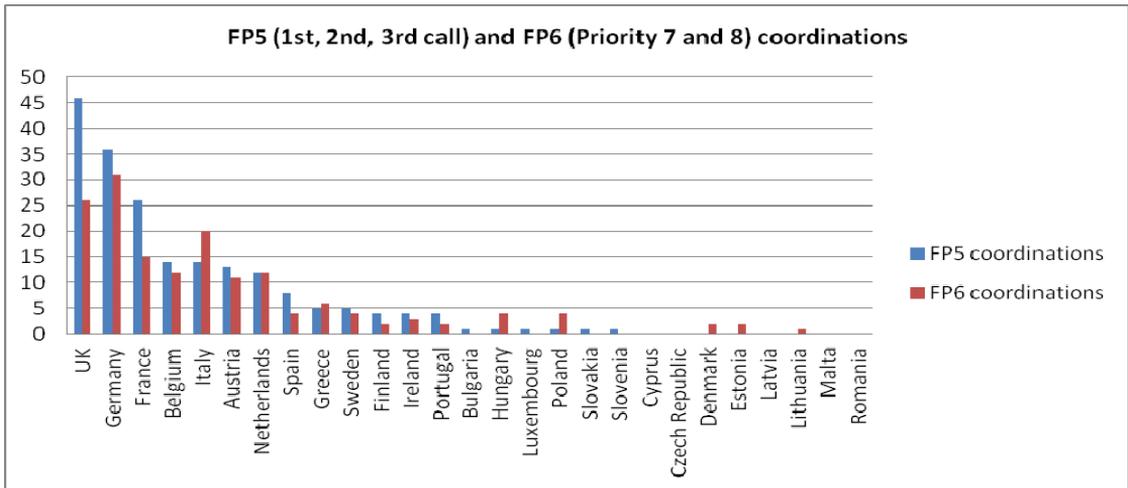
Source: Data constructed from EC publications on the CORDIS website

Overall, both tables above show that there has been a general increase of participations in SSH-related projects under the Framework Programmes. In particular this seems to be the case for the EU Member States, such as the UK, France and Germany, and to a lesser extent for smaller or Eastern European countries.

Largest EU Member States have highest number of SSH project coordinations

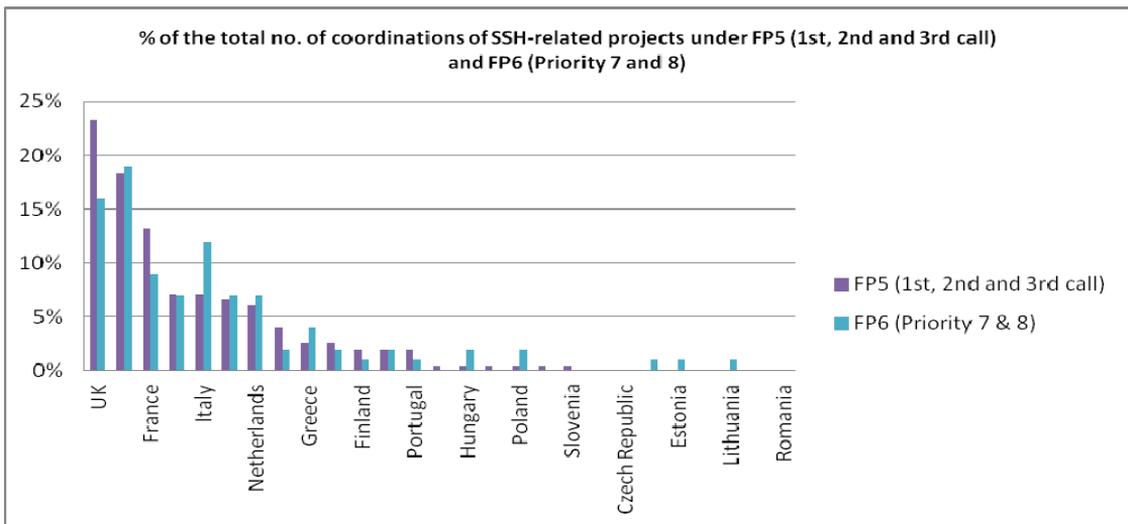
The graph below shows that the UK, Germany and France were also the countries coordinating most SSH-related projects under FP5 (1st, 2nd and 3rd call) and FP6 (Priority 7 and 8), while Malta, Latvia, Czech Republic, Cyprus and Romania were not coordinating any SSH-related projects under either of the Framework Programmes.

Figure 22: Total number of SSH-related coordinations under FP5 (1st, 2nd, 3rd call) and FP6 (Priority 7 & 8)



In addition, the table below shows that in terms of the proportion of the total number of SSH-related projects coordinated under FP5 and FP6, some countries had a slight increase in coordinations of SSH related-projects when comparing FP5 and FP6, such as Germany (+1%) and Italy (+5%) while several countries had a decrease of overall coordinations of SSH-related projects, such as the UK (-7%), France (-4%).

Figure 23: % of total no. of coordinations of SSH related projects under FP5 (1st, 2nd and 3rd call) and FP6 (Priority 7 & 8)



Both tables illustrate that there has been an increase of coordinations of SSH-related projects under the Framework Programmes. In case of the larger Member States, such as UK, Germany and France, this increase has been quite significant, while smaller Member States have had a less steep increase by comparison.

Policy makers' awareness of their country's involvement in SSH elements of the FPs

Mixed levels of awareness among policy makers of the extent to which their country participates in SSH projects under the EU FPs

The majority of policy makers interviewed claimed that information exists on their country's SSH-related involvement in the EU FPs, but could not be specific about the sources of this information. Most went on to explain that no systematic approach is taken to collecting or disseminating such information. The exception to this was in Bulgaria where a national database has recently been established providing information on how and to what extent the country is engaging with the EU Framework Programmes.

Policy makers in Denmark, Estonia, Malta and Poland made it clear that there was little or no information available on participation in their countries. Reasons for the lack of information are diverse. In Austria, for example, SSH research is reportedly undertaken mainly by external research institutes which tend to be small entities. Therefore, awareness among these institutes of the countries' SSH involvement in the EU FPs is high but this does not seem to extend to those working in policy. Policy makers in Greece had similar perceptions: The Ministries of Development and Education reportedly have little or no involvement in the design and implementation of projects. This is carried out by the National Contact Points and other organisations such as universities and research centres.

Knowledge of research institutes involved in EU networks higher in smaller countries

In smaller countries, policy-makers' awareness of which research institutes/organisations are involved in EU networks and projects, is mainly due to increased credibility and reputation that comes with being involved in a project at the European level. Policy makers in Romania, Hungary and Malta found that the greatest impact of their country's involvement in the Framework Programmes is the international recognition and reputation gained by organisations and researchers that participate.

In larger European Member States where there are more universities and research institutes participating in SSH-related projects under the Framework Programme there is far less detailed awareness of the number of and the types of organisation involved.

Perception of high administrative burden in applying for EU funding makes national funding more attractive to researchers

Some policy makers stated that national funding of research projects has a better reputation among SSH researchers than funding provided by the Framework Programmes, because there is a perception that it is easier to apply for funding from national institutions as opposed to applying for EU funding. Some also mentioned that the significant administrative burden that comes with involvement in the EU FPs compared with applying for funding domestically. They went on to say that many institutions do not have the resources required to support project coordination.

Little formal discussion between researchers and policy makers on SSH research results

Very little information is available with regard to formal discussion of FP-funded SSH research results taking place between researchers and national policy makers. Policy makers in four countries, namely Cyprus, Greece, Luxembourg and Romania, reported that to their knowledge, no discussions on SSH research results (including FP funded SSH research results) is taking place. In Cyprus, Greece and Romania, the main involvement of SSH researchers in national policy making is through their participation in national advisory bodies. Policy makers in Malta and Poland, however, explicitly stated that results from SSH projects, including FP funded projects, are usually disseminated and discussed with policy makers. Policy makers in the remaining countries were not able to provide information on this issue.

Perceptions of SSH elements of the FP

To overcome the traditional fragmentation of research efforts in the EU through better coordination and cooperation, under FP6 the EC introduced the programme *"Integrating and Strengthening the European Research Area"*, from which a new initiative, the ERA-Net scheme, was financed.

The ERA-Net scheme, which is about the coordination and cooperation of national and regional programmes, is directly aimed at national and regional programme makers and managers. These are, in most EU countries, either working in the Ministries or working in national funding agencies, which implement programmes on behalf of their governments. The scheme enables them to work together and to engage in joint research programmes with an agreed common funding budget.

Thus, the scheme provides targeted support for the coordination and mutual opening of national and regional research programmes, as well as establishing long-term co-operation between national programmes, which ultimately leads to joint transnational research programmes.

There is a table in the Appendices (Section 13) which provide an overview of Member States' participations in the ERA-Net scheme. The information shown in the table has been extracted from the *"ERA-NET Review 2006: The Report of the Expert Review Group"* (December 2006)⁹. The report states that from 2002 – 2006, a total of 71 ERA-Nets took place, of which 11% related to SSH. All ERA-Nets fall under 4 vertical areas: Industrial Technologies, Life Sciences, Environment and Research, and Humanities and Social Sciences. There are also 2 cross-cutting areas: Internal Cooperation and Fundamental Research. However, no information was provided in the report on which ERA-Nets are specifically SSH related.

In a next step, the evaluation team reviewed the Matrix/Ramboll study *"Evaluation and impact assessment of the ERA-Net scheme under FP6"* and compiled a list of 12 ERA-Nets that appear to be SSH related:

1. CO-REACH (Natural sciences, medical and life science, engineering, social sciences and humanities)
2. ERA-AGE (Population ageing)
3. ERA-SAGE (Ethical, Legal and Social Aspects of Genomics)
4. EURYI (Careers in scientific research)
5. EU-SEC (Security)
6. FORSOCIETY (Research Foresight)
7. HERA (Humanities)
8. NEW OSH ERA (Occupational Safety and Health)
9. NORFACE (Social Science)
10. SEE-ERA NET (S&T policy coordination)
11. WORK-IN-NET (Innovation in work organization)
12. URBAN-NET (Urban environment, urban sustainability)

As the table in the Appendices (Section 13) shows, all EU Member States have participated in at least one SSH-related ERA-Net. No information was available for Lithuania. Involvement in SSH-related ERA-Nets as a proportion of all ERA-Nets amounted to between 11% and 16% for many of the larger Member States, including France, Germany, Poland and the UK. While Bulgaria has only been involved in 5 ERA-Nets, 3 of these were related to SSH.

⁹ ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/coordination/docs/era_net_review_report_dec2006_en.pdf

The table below gives an overview of Member States' involvement per SSH related ERA-NET.

Figure 24. Member States' involvement per SSH related ERA-NET

Name	Number of involvements
CO-REACH	7
ERA-AGE	12
ERA-SAGE	5
EURYI	1
EU-SEC	10
FORSOCIETY	13
HERA	11
NEW OSH ERA	10
NORFACE	10
SEE-ERA NET	8
WORK-IN NET	6
URBAN-NET	11
Total	104

There are a total of 104 involvements in all SSH related ERA-Nets. FORSOCIETY is the ERA-Net with the most involvements of EU Member States, followed by ERA-AGE, HERA and URBAN-Net. Those SSH-related ERA-Nets with the least participations are EURYI, ERA-SAGE and WORK-IN NET.

ERA-Net scheme helping to bring national authorities together and benefits perceived at national level

The majority of national policy-makers in participating countries were very positive about their experiences with the ERA-Net scheme. The cooperation facilitated through the scheme was seen as having strengthened and increased across Europe. Moreover, evidence suggests that the scheme had some structuring effect by helping to bring national authorities together around common themes and by establishing contacts to colleagues in other countries.

One of the main outcomes of the ERA-Net schemes was reportedly that participants could learn from each other and that it has enabled the exchange of good practices. In this context, policy makers in the UK, Slovenia and Austria stated that participation in the ERA-Net scheme created the opportunity to increase the degree of a national institutional learning, i.e. how funding mechanisms/processes operate in other European countries and what their priorities are. This was perceived as creating a “critical mass” of knowledge.

Policy makers in the Netherlands and the UK, in particular, pointed out that the ERA-Net scheme allowed research to be guided more by national authorities, allowing them to have some control/direction on the work, resulting in greater national usage and significance of research results through the direct link back into national governments. The ERA-Net scheme was also seen as allowing national authorities to focus on priorities perceived at the national level rather than purely adapting to topics and approaches prescribed by the European Commission.

Pooling of resources resulting from ERA-NET scheme facilitates high quality results

Dutch policy makers considered the coordination of the ERA-Net scheme to be a success because it managed to achieve the establishment of a “common pot” of funds to which

scientists from all research areas can apply. Moreover, the “pooling” of resources and common processes of the scheme were seen as enabling high quality results.

Combination of SSH funding (through the ERA-NET scheme and thematic programmes) perceived as an effective approach

In terms of usefulness of the ERA-Net scheme in comparison to other aspects of the Framework Programme supporting the SSH, policy makers found the potential opportunities for creating pan-European infrastructures particularly advantageous.

The thematic SSH programmes, targeted at scientists, were perceived mainly as giving researchers the freedom to engage as they see fit and to let the level of involvement be driven from the bottom up. However, the thematic programmes were not perceived as instruments which stimulate responses from policy makers in the same way as the ERA-Nets do, which actively engage policy makers.

In addition, policy makers from Lithuania, Ireland, the UK and Portugal felt that the ERA-Net scheme is easier to access (a perception that there is less competition) and manage (a perception that less administration is required) than projects under the Framework Programmes. Moreover, collaboration between a select number of partners in the ERA-Nets were seen as being more effective for smaller countries in particular.

Given that all schemes provide some sort of advantage, most policy makers thought that the combination of schemes at the EU level would be a good formula for success. This was especially expressed by policy makers from Luxembourg, Ireland, the Netherlands and Greece. Each EU scheme or instrument was seen as offering different possibilities and greater flexibility to the development of the social sciences and humanities, and overall they were perceived as complementing each other in strengthening the European Research Area. In this context, one policy maker from Luxembourg stated:

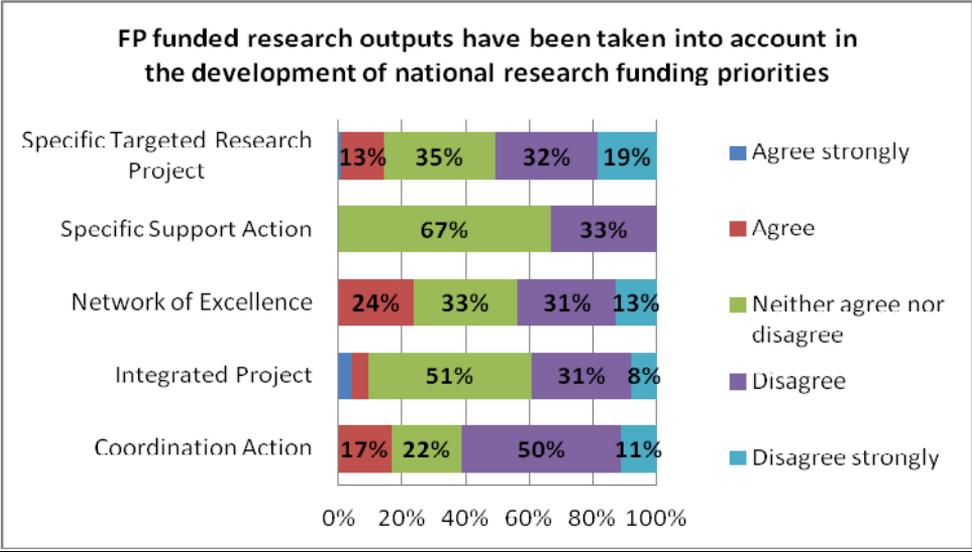
“The most effective European interaction is a combination of SSH thematic research programmes and other EC-funded research programmes in SSH.”

EU funded SSH research outputs play some role in shaping the development of national research funding priorities

There are some mixed perceptions among policy makers as well as researchers as to what extent SSH research outputs play a role in shaping the development of national research funding priorities.

Most coordinators and work package leaders surveyed with regard to the question whether FP funded research outputs have been taken into account in the development of national research funding priorities in their country were agnostic or negative.

Figure 25: FP funded research outputs have been taken into account in the development of national research funding priorities

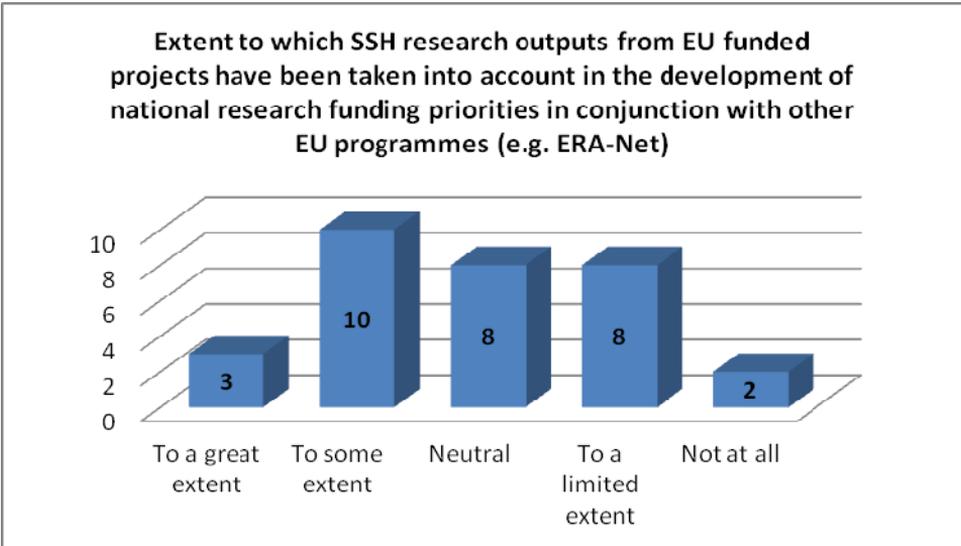


(STREP: n=91; SSA: n=9; NoE: n=55; IP: n=74; CA: n=18)

Policy makers responding to the online consultation took a similar view to the same question. When asked whether SSH research outputs from EU funded projects had been taken into account in the development of national funding priorities, in conjunction with other EU schemes e.g. ERA-Net, perceptions of impact increased.

Similar to the findings of the coordinator and work package leader survey, policy makers were reluctant when asked about the extent to which SSH research outputs from EU funded projects have been taken into account in the development of national research funding priorities, especially if entirely through projects funded in SSH programme.

Figure 26: Extent to which SSH research outputs from EU funded projects have been taken into account in the development of national research funding priorities in conjunction with other EU programmes (e.g. ERA-Net)



n=31

(**To a great extent:** Cyprus; Ireland; Netherlands; **To some extent:** Estonia; Denmark; Finland; Greece; Ireland; Slovakia; Slovenia; UK; **Neutral:** Bulgaria; Denmark; Greece; Luxembourg; Romania; Slovakia; **To a limited extent:** Czech Republic; Germany; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Malta; Portugal; Spain; Sweden; **Not at all:** Hungary; Latvia)

Key findings:

- The ERA-Nets in SSH have been particularly successful at engaging national institutions, giving a greater sense of control and level of interest than has been available with previous instruments.
- The different FP schemes that supported the Social Sciences and Humanities under FP6 have complemented each other and the combination of programmes is thought to be important.
- Thematic programmes are not perceived as instruments which stimulate responses from policy makers in the same way as the ERA-Nets, which actively engage policy makers.

SSH elements of the FP and their impact on research, researchers and research organisations

High impact on researchers and their careers

The impact of FP funding on researchers and their careers seems to be high across the 27 EU Member States.

Some policy makers expressed how important the Framework Programme is for young and mid-career scientists in smaller and Eastern European countries. Participation is viewed as highly advantageous and excellent for enhancing career prospects for researchers in those Member States. An indirect impact of involvement in the Framework Programmes is that a country's scientific capacity improves as researchers gain exposure to more experienced colleagues who can offer access to recent publications and direct advice on their research.

Contrary to this, policy makers in some larger countries reported that there is a perception among some scientists from their countries that it is only those researchers who are not successful at securing funding at national level who seek involvement in European SSH projects.

Policy makers considered international experience as a plus for researchers, especially in the social sciences and humanities, given that international mobility seems to be less common in this research field than for example in the natural sciences.

There was wide recognition that FP SSH funding facilitates researcher career progression and raises the profile of researchers across the European Union. Moreover, the ability to engage in comparative projects was seen as being a major benefit for researchers. The perception is that participation in European projects brings with it valuable experience to collaborate and learn from researchers in other countries. Additionally, there are generally a greater number of opportunities for research to get coverage in international publications which is highly valued by researchers.

Researchers' mobility issue of concern

At the same time, researchers' mobility still seems to be an issue of concern for many scientists. Policy makers are aware that researchers tend to be hesitant to leave their jobs in their home countries in order to work abroad, given that they risk not being able to reintegrate at the same level when they return. This certainly seems to be the case in some smaller, Eastern European countries. For example, one policy maker reported that several researchers had difficulties adapting to the national circumstances after returning home. They felt cut off from their colleagues in the Social Sciences and Humanities, found it difficult to realign their

research interests with national research priorities and to work at a national level again after being used to work internationally. Moreover, two interviewees raised the problem of brain drain, given that researchers are offered better jobs abroad and do not have the intention to return to their home countries. A number of policy makers from smaller countries, felt that whilst some academics devote resources to European funding applications and have been successful in this, the challenge is to motivate larger numbers of academics to apply. They found that the process of networking and consortium building is difficult and requires time.

Framework Programmes mainly perceived as one source of research funding

In larger, Western European Member States, national policy makers reported that researchers tend to view the Framework Programmes primarily as a source of research funding rather than having a greater status or importance than other (national) sources. The main focus is to try and identify money to support research. In some countries access to national funds is considered to be the first choice for most researchers, because the application process for these is less bureaucratic than for the Framework Programmes. In addition, the success rate in SSH at the European level is relatively low due to the high number of applicants and available budgets.

Difficult to measure impact of FP SSH funding

The impact of the FP SSH funding on researcher careers, SSH research and research organisations is generally difficult to measure in detail. For those researchers in SSH who are motivated by working internationally, collaboration with colleagues in other countries has become a regular and normal activity.

One policy maker stated that the impact of the Framework Programme on research institutions in his country has been that their approach to research is changing. The institutions now know how to approach the thematic programme of the Framework Programmes and how to work collaboratively with international partners. Researchers have gained additional skills, greater openness and a change of attitude, so that when partners from abroad get in touch, they no longer have the same kind of reticence that they had before.

Key findings:

- The perceived value of international research careers and the involvement in FP funded projects is very high, particularly for young and mid-career scientists, and usually allows for future EU involvement.
- Research organisations are perceived as benefitting from involvement in the Framework Programmes in terms of prestige and reputation.

5.1.2 SSH elements of the FP and their influence on research policy/strategy

Evidence gleaned from the interviews with policy makers indicates that perceptions of the usefulness of SSH research is increasing in the majority of European Member States. In particular, policy makers in Eastern European countries identified a marked difference in appreciation of the value of SSH research between the pre- and post communist era.

Some influence of SSH elements of the EU FPs on national research policies/strategies

Almost all policy makers interviewed agreed that general European debates on and processes related to science policy, such as the Bologna process or the European Research Area, largely influence national policy making and that their concepts are present in the national policy discourse.

With regard to SSH research in particular, the majority of policy makers interviewed claimed that the SSH policies and strategies in their countries have been determined and driven first

and foremost at national level, based on the priorities and needs of their countries. For example, one policy maker from Belgium stated:

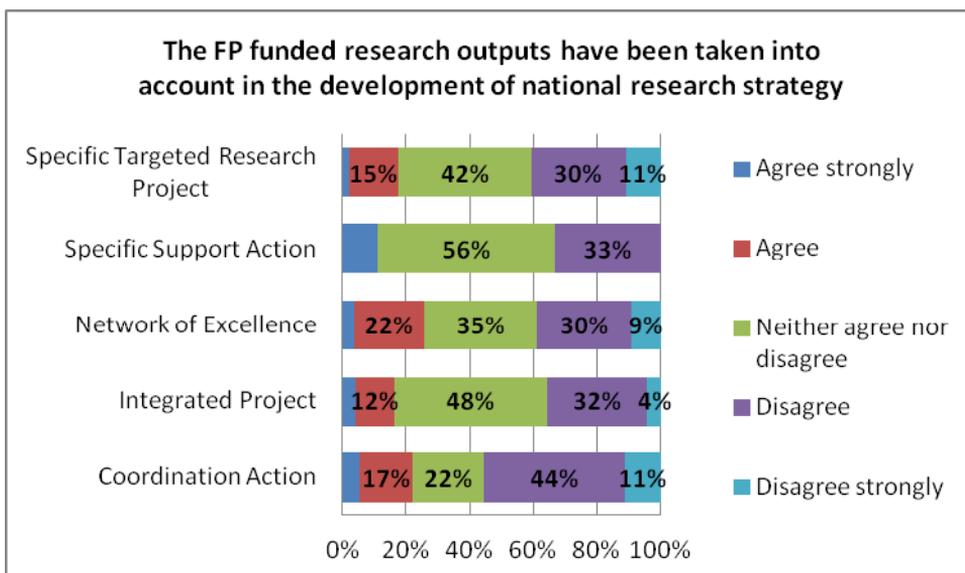
“National research policy in Belgium has to prioritise and cater for national needs. Only then the EU dimension can be incorporated although overall I think the influence of EU research is low.”

Nevertheless, there was a general consensus among policy makers interviewed that the SSH elements of the FP have had / do have some, albeit limited, influence on national SSH research policies and strategies. By way of an example, a policy maker in Luxembourg stated:

“While there are no formal initiatives to align national SSH research thematic priorities to EU SSH research thematic priorities, EU research outputs in national policy developments are taken into account.”

The results of the online survey with coordinators and work package leaders show a rather split perception of respondents on the influence of research outputs produced by projects funded under the Framework Programmes on the development of national research strategies. Most respondents seem to be uncertain about the influence that research outputs might have had, or do not believe that FP funded research outputs have had an influence on the development on national research strategies.

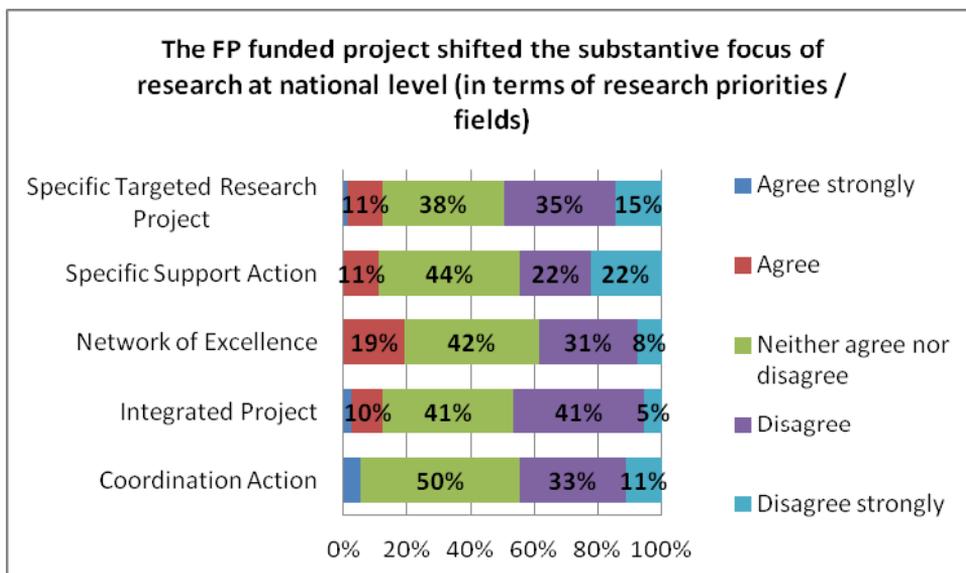
Figure 27: FP funded research outputs have been taken into account in the development of national research strategy



(STREP: n=91; SSA: n=9; NoE: n=54; IP: n=73; CA: n=18)

According to the findings of the survey with coordinators and work package leaders, most respondents across all funding had either no opinion or a negative tendency towards the statement that the FP funded project shifted the substantive focus of research at national level (such as in terms of research priorities or research fields). This suggests that the FP funded projects had no direct impact on the focus of research at the national level.

Figure 28: FP funded projects shifted the substantive focus of research at national level (in terms of research priorities / fields)



(STREP: n=89; SSA: n=9; NoE: n=52; IP: n=73; CA: n=18)

In contrast, the findings of the online consultation with national policy makers show that the majority of respondents (23%; n=37) believe that particular initiatives have been taken to align national research priorities in SSH to EU research policy.

The extent of this impact or influence varies from country to country. For example, policy makers in Sweden stated that SSH is not the subject of a significant amount of debate and discussion and there is not high demand for research in SSH. Policy makers in Greece stated that no initiatives exist to align national SSH research thematic priorities with EU research thematic priorities, and that the exploitation of EU research outputs in national policy developments is more common among the scientific community as opposed to those involved in policy development. By contrast, policy makers in The Netherlands and Romania perceived that the SSH elements in the FP have played a role in influencing their national SSH policies, strategies and organisational structures.

Limited influence of national SSH research results on national policies/strategies

In line with the finding above, the majority of policy makers consulted stated that the incorporation of SSH research results developed at national level sometimes find their way into a policy or into the policy development process. Similar to SSH research results at EU level, however, the exploitation of SSH research outputs at national level seems to be far more relevant to the scientific community than those developing policy.

In general, policy makers reported that the focus of most national authorities seems to be on information and data on current issues which are often high on the agenda of those Ministries dealing with public finances. For example, gauging the state of the economy or understanding the issues affecting employment. Many policy makers interviewed acknowledged that there was potential and good rationale for using SSH research in this context. More specifically, policy makers in the Eastern European Member States explained the need for SSH research to assess the impacts on changes in society and lifestyles of citizens. Specific examples of this

included examining the options and choices for the development of a knowledge-based society and the implications of European integration and enlargement for governance and citizens.

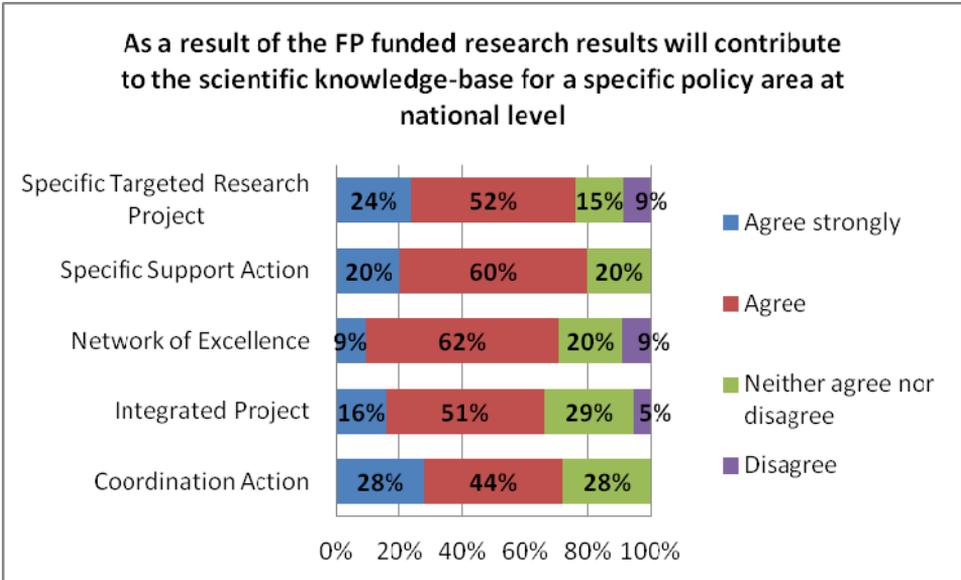
EU FPs used as model approach in some Eastern European Member States

Policy makers from Eastern European Member States stated that the EU FPs have been held up as a model approach for a way in which to fund and stimulate research. Although these countries have not secured significant funding for SSH through the EU FPs they have benefitted from understanding the mechanics of the FPs. This has resulted in some “fine-tuning” of institutional structures in Poland, Slovenia and Bulgaria, for instance. In Poland and Slovenia, several university research institutes follow research topics at the EU level closely and have proposed several topics that feature in EU FP calls for national research funding. Furthermore through participation of researchers in EU consortia, problems and debates relevant and present on the European scientific scene play some role in determining the research at the national level. For example, Bulgarian policy makers stated that national SSH programmes were modelled on EU programmes, and that national criteria for project evaluation and monitoring of projects had been adapted to reflect EU policy and procedure.

SSH FP research results are perceived to contribute to knowledge base at national and European level

While there is a general consensus among policy makers that national SSH research policy is driven domestically, there is evidence to suggest that the SSH FP has influence and contributes in some way. Feedback from the coordinators and work package leaders indicates that the SSH FP research results will contribute to the scientific knowledge base for a specific policy area at national level. Most significantly, 76% of STREP respondents, 71% of NoE respondents, 67% of Integrated Project respondents agreed that research results from the SSH FP will feed into policy areas at national level.

Figure 29: Results will contribute to the scientific knowledge-base for a specific policy area at national level

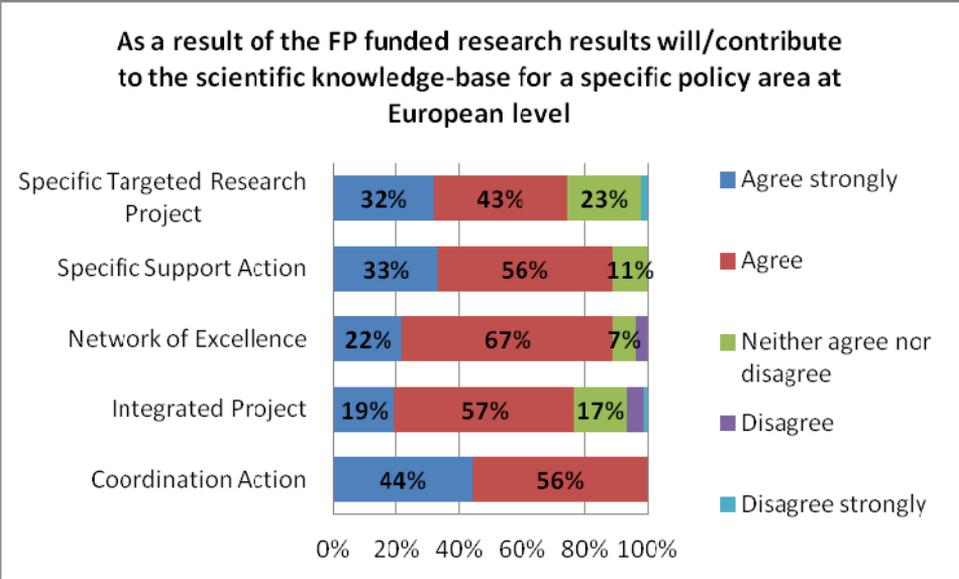


(STREP: n=92; SSA: n=10; NoE: n=55; IP: n=77; CA: n=18)

It should be noted that coordinators and work package leaders are even more convinced that SSH FP research results will contribute to the scientific knowledge base for a specific policy area at European level. 75% of STREP respondents, an overwhelming 89% of NoE

respondents and 76% of Integrated Project respondents agreed that research results from the SSH FP will feed into policy areas at European level.

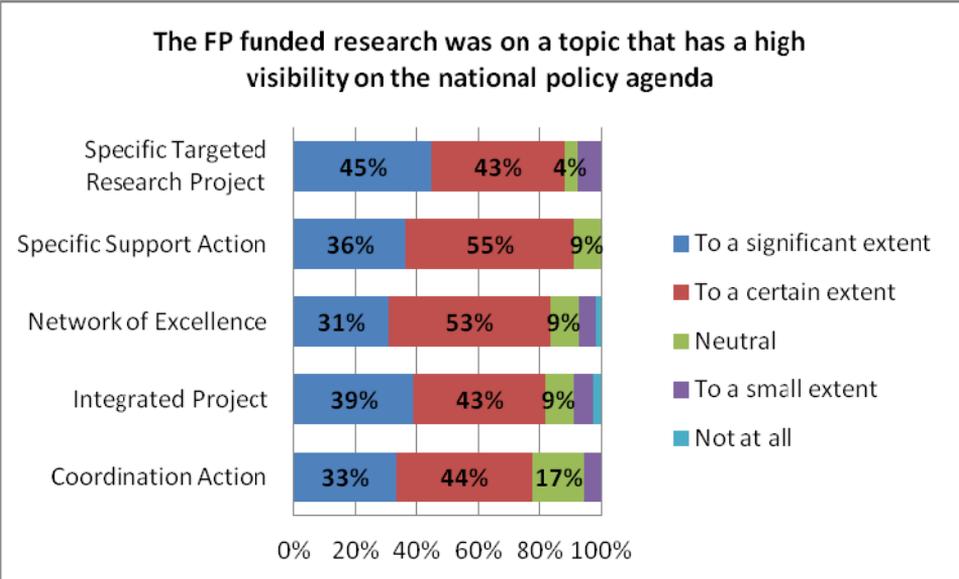
Figure 30: Results will contribute to the scientific knowledge-base for a specific policy area at European level



(STREP: n=91; SSA: n=9; NoE: n=55; IP: n=77; CA: n=18)

SSH FP research topics perceived to have high visibility at the national level

Figure 31: The FP funded research was on a topic that has a high visibility on the national policy agenda



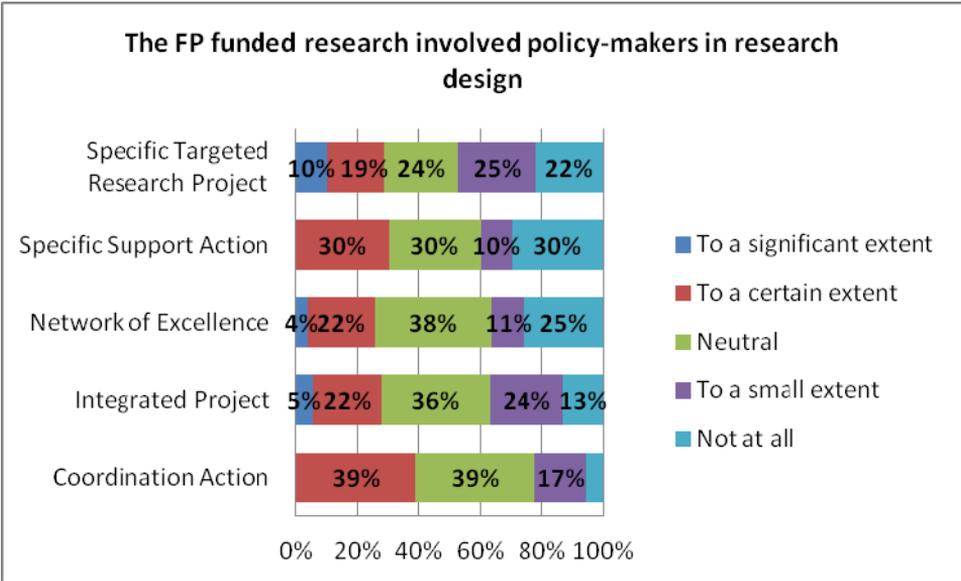
(STREP: n=92; SSA: n=11; NoE: n=55; IP: n=77; CA: n=18)

According to coordinators and work package leaders, the SSH research topics under the FP seem to enjoy a good level of visibility at national level. Circa 37% of respondents across all

funding instruments (STREPs, SSAs, NoEs, IPs, CAs) felt that this was true to a significant extent and 48% agreed with this to a certain extent. This demonstrates that at the very least many of the research areas covered by the SSH FP are relevant at national level.

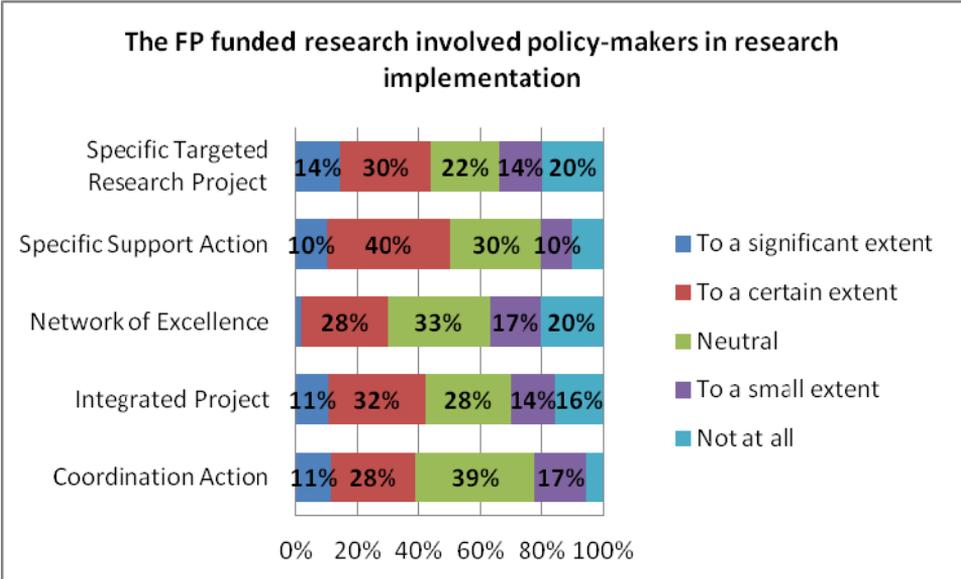
Policy maker involvement increases throughout the various stages of SSH FP research - from design through to implementation and dissemination

Figure 32: The FP funded research involved policy-makers in research design



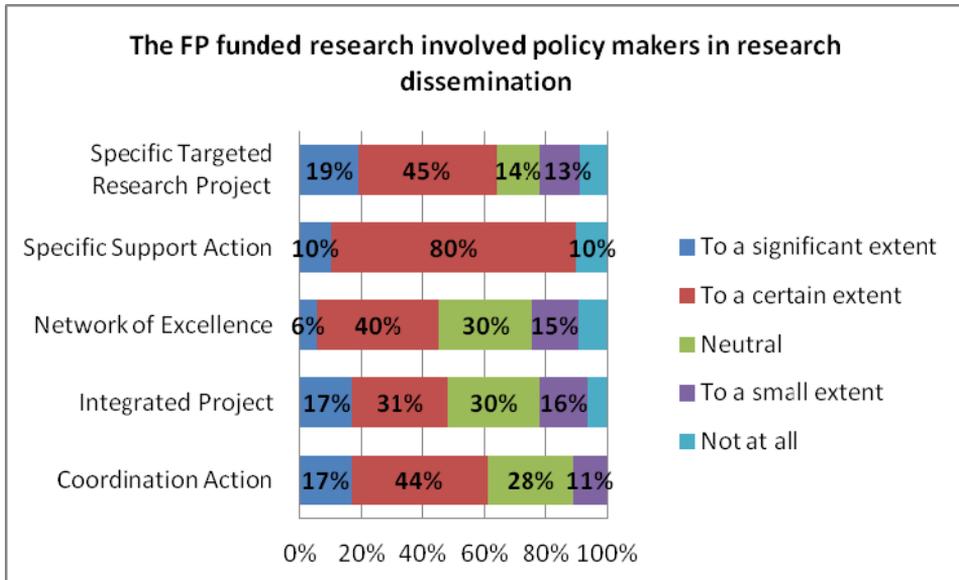
(STREP: n=91; SSA: n=10; NoE: n=55; IP: n=76; CA: n=18)

Figure 33: The FP funded research involved policy-makers in research implementation



(STREP: n=91; SSA: n=10; NoE: n=54; IP: n=76; CA: n=18)

Figure 34: The FP funded research involved policy-makers in research dissemination



(STREP: n=91; SSA: n=10; NoE: n=53; IP: n=77; CA: n=18)

Coordinators and work package leaders surveyed engage more with policy makers at the research implementation stage than at the design stage of their SSH FP work. This involvement with policy makers increases even more at the point the research starts to be disseminated and when policy recommendations are formulated. Circa 30% of respondents across the funding instruments agreed that their research involved policy makers at the design stage compared with 40% at the implementation stage and 60% at the dissemination stage. This conveys a message that research results are more relevant and useful to policy makers than how the research is planned and executed. This is another illustration of how policy could well have been influenced at national level through the SSH FP.

Involvement in SSH FP has resulted in participation in national research policy making / advisory bodies and evaluation research panels for some coordinators and workpackage leaders

Circa a third of coordinators and workpackage leaders claimed to have been asked to participate in national research policy making / advisory bodies as a result of their involvement in the SSH FP. This is particularly evident for those involved in STREPs and NoEs where 32% and 37% of respondents agreed that this was the case respectively.

An even greater proportion of coordinators and workpackage leaders claimed to have been asked to participate in evaluation panels for research projects / programmes. Across the funding instruments it was those involved in the STREPs and NoEs who were most likely to be involved with 46% and 43% claiming to be asked to participate respectively.

Structuring effect through involvement in SSH elements of the EU FPs

Dutch policy makers thought that the participation in the Framework Programmes, predominantly in FP6, enabled researchers to gain valuable knowledge on how to engage internationally. The interaction between researchers and universities in The Netherlands and abroad as well as the introduction of officers in every Dutch university, who manage the involvement in the Framework Programmes, were seen as structural impacts of the participation in the FP SSH thematic programme. In addition, Romanian policy makers stated that the country's second national plan is very much in line with the way in which FP7 is

structured. Policy makers from Belgium and Poland also reported that their involvement in the SSH elements of the EU FPs has influenced the way that research funding is administered at the national level, for example by following EC rules on allowable costs, funding priorities, programming and eligibility criteria.

Researchers involved in EU FP’s have high credibility with policy makers

The majority of policy makers perceived researchers involved in the Framework Programmes as having greater credibility, which enhances their opportunities to communicate research results and findings to politicians. This is supported by the results of the online consultation, which show that there is a tendency for policy makers to involve researchers engaged in EU projects in national research policy making or in advisory bodies.

THE STRUCTURING EFFECTS OF LARGE INSTRUMENTS (PARTICULARLY NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE)

Introduction

The 3rd call for proposals under FP5 for the key action “Improving the socioeconomic knowledge base” was based on the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of March 2000 that “The Union has today set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.”¹⁰. The call for proposals aimed at actively contributing to the development of the social sciences and humanities in view of the European Research Area.

The Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2002-2006) was seen as a tool which would start to make the European Research Area (ERA) a reality.

Rather than the series of vertical and horizontal programmes of the past, FP6 had two Specific Programmes: ‘Integrating and Strengthening ERA’ and ‘Structuring ERA’. In an attempt to build the ERA according to the concept outlined in 2000, two new funding instruments were introduced: Networks of Excellence (NoEs) and Integrated Projects (IPs). (A range of other funding instruments were also available for the support of research, which had derived from FP5, such as Specific targeted research projects, Coordination actions and Specific support actions.) Table 1 provides an overview of the features of the new instruments.

Table 6: Overview of the Network of Excellence and the Integrated Project Instruments

Overview of the Network of Excellence and the Integrated Project Instruments		
Characteristics	Networks of Excellence ¹¹	Integrated Projects ¹²
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen scientific and technological excellence by integrating critical mass of resources and expertise; overcome fragmentation of EU research; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> obtain specific results to increase EU competitiveness/address major societal needs; objective-driven research; new knowledge.

¹⁰ Improving the Human Research Potential and the Socio-economic Knowledge Base; Edition July 2001, Work Programme, 6th Update, p. 37.

¹¹ Provision for implementing Networks of Excellence, Background document, FP6 Instruments Task Force, European Commission, 12 May 2003, p. 1

¹² Provision for implementing Integrated Projects, Background document, FP6 Instruments Task Force, European Commission, 12 May 2003, p. 1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • durable structuring and shaping of EU research. 	
Scale of critical mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide European leadership and create a world force; • assemble critical mass of resources and expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mobilise activities/resources needed to achieve ambitious objectives;
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating activities; • Jointly executed research; • Activities designed to spread excellence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTD; • Innovation related activities; • Demonstration activities; • Training for researchers/key staff.

The large instruments involved European researchers in large scale, network based research work.¹³ They were intended to have a structuring effect on European research. The Integrated Projects were to assemble all major players in a specific area and to establish a “critical mass” of activity big enough to affect Europe’s competitiveness or to address major social needs. However, as the evaluation report of the Sixth Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development 2000-2006 points out, the concept of NoEs changed a number of times, from being major funding instruments with few partners, to instruments with many participants. This was due to the fact that “publicity pointed increasingly to the need for NoE applications to have many participants”.¹⁴

Overall, the new instruments were intended to mobilise the critical mass of expertise needed to achieve ambitious objectives, as well as the structuring and integrating effects on European research that ERA foresaw. Within Priority 7 of FP6 (Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-Based Society), a total of 34 projects were selected which made use of these instruments (20 Integrated Projects and 14 Networks of Excellence).

METHODOLOGY

The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the study put a particular emphasis on understanding the structuring effect of the NoEs and IPs, including the types of structures developed and their significance to the SSH field. The assessment aims to draw out the extent to which economies of scale were made possible as a result of the structuring process as well as the extent of identifying infrastructure and training developments.

The main thrust of the approach to the assessment of the large instruments comprised:

1. A review of all 34 large instruments under FP6 as part of the inventory exercise conducted during the inception phase of this project. This included looking closely at all the interim and final project assessment reports.
2. The selection of a sample of 8 NoEs (out of a total of 14 NoEs) and 9 IPs (out of a total of 20 IPs). This sample of large instrument projects was determined by including co-ordinators representing a wide spread of European Member States. Twenty seven¹⁵ coordinators were initially contacted and seventeen agreed to take part in the

¹³ Kuhn, M., Remøe, S. O., 2005. *Building the European Research Area*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, p. 7

¹⁴ *Evaluation of the Sixth Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development 2002-2006*, Report of the Expert Group under Prof. Ernst Th. Rietschel, February 2009, p. 30

¹⁵ Seven coordinators of large instrument projects were not contacted as they had been consulted when developing the inventory of large data-sets and infrastructures as well as the case studies and the assessment of researcher careers.

evaluation. The co-ordinators were engaged through face to face and telephone interviews. While the sample reflects a good proportion of large instrument projects it does not constitute a fully comprehensive review of all large instrument projects.

Table 7: Sample of Projects

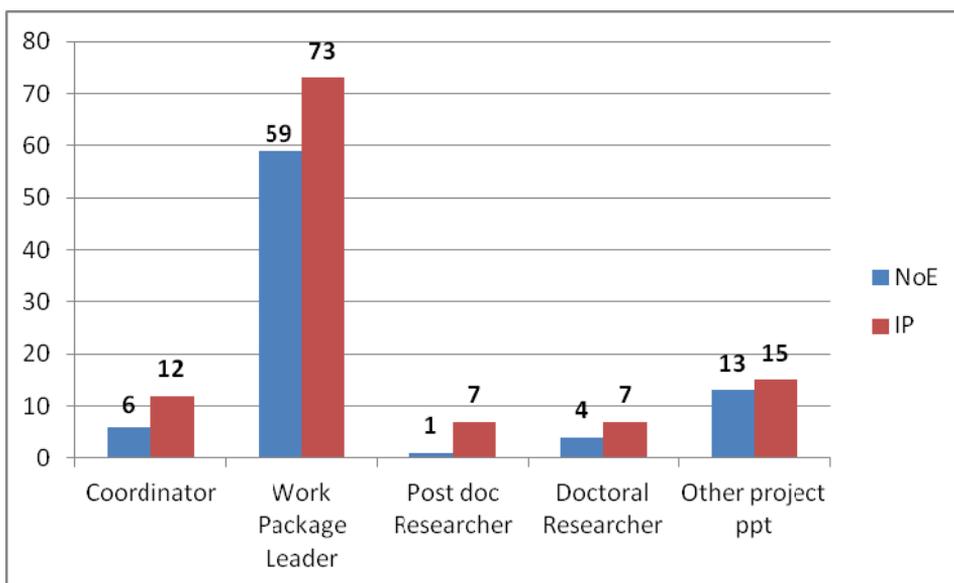
Networks of Excellence	Integrated Projects
EU-CONSENT – Constructing Europe Network	DYLAN - Language Dynamics and Management of Diversity EU
GARNET - Global governance, Regionalisation & Regulation: The role of the EU	INCLUD-ED - Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from education
LINEE – Languages in a Network of European Excellence	KNOWANDPOL – Knowledge and Policy in education and health sectors
PRIME - Policies for Research and Innovation in the Move towards the European Research Area	EUROSPHERE - Diversity and the European Public Sphere. Towards a Citizens' Europe
CLIOHRES.NET - Creating Links and Innovative Overviews for a New History Research Agenda for the Citizens of a Growing Europe	INTUNE – Integrated and United
CONNEX – Connecting Excellence on European Governance	QUING – Quality in Gender Equality Policies
IMISCOE – International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion	WORKS – Changes in Work
EQUALSOC – Economic Change, Quality of Life and Social Cohesion	ACRE - Accommodating Creative Knowledge – Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions within the Enlarged Union
	FEMCIT - Gendered Citizenship in Multicultural Europe: The Impact of Contemporary Womens's Movements

3. A series of face-to face and telephone interviews with researchers from the sample of projects that had been funded as large instruments. For each project an interview was held with the project coordinator. A discussion guide was developed to structure the interviews and facilitate comparisons between responses. The interview guide covered areas with regard to perceptions and views about the large instruments, their development over time, their usefulness and challenges perceived etc. In addition, and to complement the interviews with project coordinators, a smaller sample of project participants working at junior, mid-career or senior levels was interviewed. These interviews provided the opportunity to collect evidence from individuals working on the projects directly and not tasked with performing any management function. The risk of bias due to the fact that interviewees were self-selected, was to some extent counterbalanced by the integration of survey responses to this assessment, as well as findings from the interviews on the impact on careers that were carried out as a separate strand of this study.

To increase the robustness of the personal views that were captured through the interview process, findings from the following activities were also taken into account:

- Responses to a large-scale survey of mainly senior researchers. The survey generated responses from 461 researchers including 115 responses relating to Integrated Projects and 84 responses relating to Networks of Excellence. Although the majority of interviews were carried out with project coordinators, this group was a less significant group in the respondents to the survey, which helped to redress any imbalance in the view received via the interviews.

Figure 35: Profile of respondents to researcher survey from IP or NoE projects



The following table shows the confidence level and interval of the online survey with coordinators and work package leaders.

Table 8: Confidence level and interval of online survey with coordinators and work package leaders of SSH projects under FP6 and the 3rd call of FP5

Survey respondents	Number of responses (Sample)	Survey invitations sent (Population)	Response rate (%)	Confidence Level and Interval
Sent to Co-ordinators and work-package leaders	305	2231	17.3%	Sample = 305 Population = 2231 95% +/- 5.2%
Sent to project participants	160	N/A	N/A	Unable to calculate

As the table shows, it can be assumed with a likelihood of 95% that the results from the survey with co-ordinators and work package leaders (please note that this does not apply to project participant respondents) accurately reflect the views of the total population of this group to within +/-5.2%.

- The mapping of relationships between countries resulting from involvement in the large instruments, based on contract data for FP6. The significance of relationships is calculated according to the amount of funding allocated for the work undertaken. A detailed report is available in the Appendices (Section 7).

FEEDBACK AND RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the investigation carried out. Topics relating to both NoEs and IPs are reported first, followed by sections which are devoted to each separate instrument.

“Integrated projects and networks of excellence are recognised as being an overall priority means to attain the objectives of critical mass, integration of the research capacities, management simplification and European added value.”¹⁶ These objectives and the following more general aspects, which apply to both the Networks of Excellence and the Integrated Projects, are considered below:

- Management/coordination of projects supported as large instruments
- Achievement of critical mass
- Achievement of economies of scale
- Integrating/structuring effects of IPs and NoEs to ERA
- Interaction with policy making
- Lasting impact

5.1.2.1 Management/Coordination of IPs and NoEs

There is a perceived need for significant research management experience to maximise the potential of a large instrument. The importance of experience can be identified at a number of levels, for example to:

- build a winning research consortium to compete in the calls for proposals and to ensure the delivery of high quality results, reputation and demonstrable success within the specific field, which are key to attracting partners with the high level of expertise required. As the large instruments offered the potential for larger consortia involving a wider spectrum of countries, reputation could be considered to be even more fundamental than for smaller projects, because researchers had the opportunity to collaborate with those outside their usual group of contacts;
- develop the more complex structure that a large project entails due to its size, including the required integration of research outputs and networking activities to achieve a result of greater significance than from the individual teams involved; coordinators of the large instruments usually had management experience of other scientific projects, which helped them to apply their expertise to effectively structure and lead the NoEs and IPs;
- manage a much larger number of partners and project participants than had been required under FP5, whilst also assuming technical leadership of the overall project. There was also a need to consider the ability to balance the significantly greater amount of time required to manage larger instruments involving more complex relationships, due to more complicated interactions involving the bringing together of different or larger groupings of national research cultures, as well as researchers in scientific disciplines not necessarily used to working together, whilst at the same time meeting Commission reporting requirements.

¹⁶ FP6 Specific Programme “Integrating and Strengthening the European Research Area”, Priority 7: Citizens and Governance in a knowledge based society, Work Programme 2004 – 2006, p.28

All project coordinators confirmed that they had been involved in collaborative international research before and 7 coordinators reported that they had managed very large projects funded through other sources of comparable or greater in size than the large instrument project that they managed under FP6. One coordinator stated that:

“I have coordinated a very large project funded by national sources, involving 66 individual projects with a budget of 8 million, which I have gained a lot of experience through that was of use in coordinating this project under FP6.”

However, not all coordinators commented specifically on this point. In addition to managing the project, three coordinators expressed a strong opinion about the importance of coordinators’ scientific leadership of the project in order to maintain respect and credibility among their research peers and to enhance their own career progression. One coordinator of an IP commented:

“It is important for coordinators to combine the scientific and management roles, as otherwise the coordinator has limited credibility in the short term with regard to the project, and in the longer term is not contributing to his or her career progression.”

Although coordinators of smaller projects need to combine their scientific and management roles for their projects, the defining factor relates to the fact that the much greater volume of management required by coordinators of larger projects resulted in considerable pressure to also be able to provide technical leadership.

However, there were a few examples where coordinators reported that they accepted that by acting as coordinator of a large project, particularly a Network of Excellence, they were not actively enhancing their research career because of the need to focus on coordinating aspects and the difficulty/inability to follow up other research assignments. Several comments were received that the amount of funding to support the organisational/administrative aspects of the consortia was not proportionate to the additional work that larger instruments required and that this was an area to be addressed. One coordinator working for a research institution in Italy, for example, stated that:

“From a career perspective being involved in a NoE does not advance one’s career in any way. When it comes to asking for a promotion, only publications count. The time required to make a network work is phenomenal, but this is not rewarded in research recognition structures.”

In addition, one coordinator of an NoE who gave up the coordination role cited the lack of time to focus on her own research as the main reason why.

With regard to the overall scheme of large instruments, coordinators highlighted the benefits of the concentration of larger numbers of researchers around more significant research goals particularly from the perspective of facilitating more meaningful comparative research than had been feasible previously under earlier Framework Programmes. However, the analysis of the results of the survey of researchers highlights no significant differences between the responses provided by those involved in Integrated Projects, Networks of Excellence or the other instruments of FP6 on whether their project had:

- reduced fragmentation of research topics along national lines;
- led to research of wider European coverage than was previously the case, or
- bridged gaps between different disciplines/approaches on the topic

The findings from the interviews with coordinators and projects participants of large instruments also suggest that there is a need for, consortia to be build from a core or hub of previous experience to provide the stability that large scale transnational research requires. This appears to be especially important due to the more complex structures and working

arrangements of the large instruments that were required to deliver against ambitious research goals in networking arrangements.

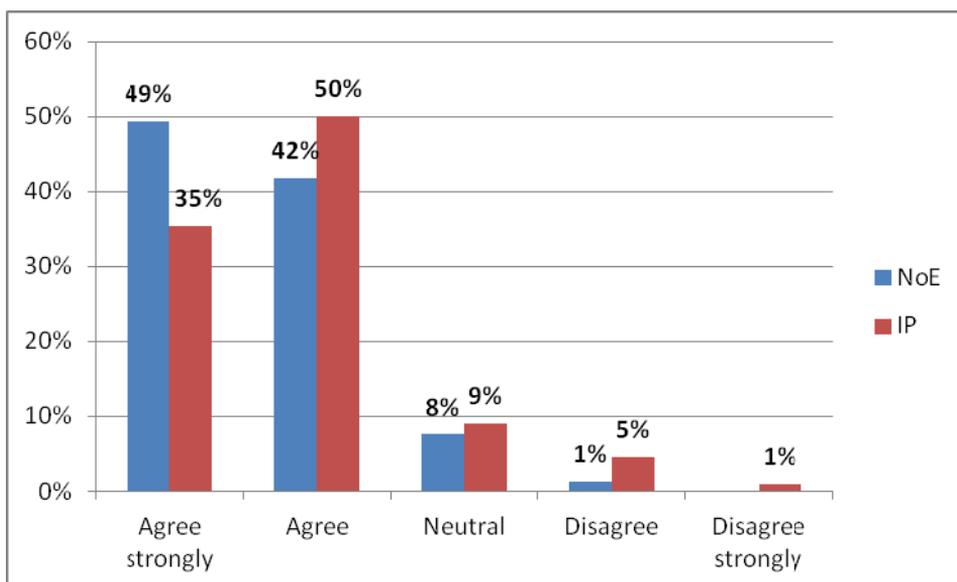
The need to build upon some previous experience was confirmed by all project coordinators interviewed for this assessment, irrespective of whether they managed an Integrated Project or a Network of Excellence. All coordinators had worked with at least some partners in their consortia before and reported that this was essential to building the research team. The key word for each coordinator was “trust”. However, previous experience was not necessarily limited to previous relationships between the coordinator and his or her collaborators; this could also include other senior researchers who were known either by their reputation or via their work with collaborators of the coordinator.

Trust appears to be fundamental to the architecture of the team and to support the development of enlarged networks. Coordinators reported that for building and running projects funded as large instruments it is necessary to have a number of reliable research institutes, including partners whose specialism was known in detail to the coordinator. In terms of the approach to structuring teams for the large instruments, coordinators selected the best leaders in their fields for respective work packages. These formed the core around which other researchers were grouped. The “trickle down effect” (from coordinators to work package leaders) and “ripple effect” (from work package leaders to researchers in the team) can be considered characteristics of effective networking. As the networks expand they pull in disciplines, researchers, institutes and countries that were not directly linked to the coordinator, thereby enhancing and enriching any previous interactions between researchers. It was reported that this process is vital to the planning of new research systems that are more internationally orientated, building up training for the sector and trying to get the relevant/consistent messages across to those working in the same field.

Although not all coordinators commented on this point, several mentioned that despite the need to work with trusted collaborators at the core of the project, the large instruments had pushed coordinators to step outside of their comfort zone and invest in and develop new relationships, which resulted in the expansion of networks. This finding applied to both, NoEs and IPs. The finding is supported by the survey results which indicate a high level of agreement with the statement that the FP project led to an increased volume of networking opportunities for both IPs and NoEs. However, the level of strong agreement was higher for NoEs at 46% than for IPs at 34%. In considering the extent that networks were likely to continue into the future, whilst positive feedback was received relating to both types of instruments, the chart below highlights the stronger significance of this statement to Networks of Excellence.

This suggests a key reality which is that although Networks of Excellence and Integrated Projects did not necessarily start from the establishment of brand new untested collaborations and partnerships, a level of familiarity between a core of partners and the potential for larger scale projects offered by these new research instruments resulted in the extension of networks to involve new contacts and partners with the potential for new formulations for research teams in the future.

Figure 36: Extent that networks are likely to continue into the future



At the project level, the behavioural change related to the perception of increased discipline required to be involved in a large-scale instrument project was reported by some coordinators. Discipline was required for the hard work necessary to keep up with deadlines, affecting a larger number of partners than in previous EC projects and due to the fact that a common approach had to be agreed on and taken by all. However, a perceived structural change was that several coordinators reported that working together resulted in the different research partners being much more able and willing to work together at the European level. This was considered to be a significant achievement because it broadened the constituency of institutions. Contrary to this view, two coordinators of Integrated Projects stated that at the practical level, having to follow a common research methodology could be stressful for researchers and in some ways limit their creativity because of the need to follow a common approach, the strict deadlines set and the way that resources need to be tightly allocated, so that there is no scope to study new issues or questions that might arise or are of personal interest.

Key findings

- Coordinators report that the large instruments required more sophisticated management approaches and some coordinators drew from management and organisational science to underpin their project processes.
- There is a mixed view regarding the benefits to coordinators' research career of being involved. Several NoE coordinators reported that time invested to develop projects and keep them running was not rewarded in research recognition structures.
- Results of the researcher survey suggest that the instruments supported under FP6 tended to reduce fragmentation of research topics along national lines, led to research of wider European coverage than was previously the case, and bridged gaps between different disciplines/approaches on the topic. Although the survey results do not allow

differentiation between tools it is assumed that NoEs and IPs were more effective due to their size.

- It seems likely that large scale transnational research will always be built from a core of known relationships because this provides the stability that seems to be a pre-requirement for coordinators.
- Large but effective networks seem to have a ripple effect with trusted relationships as the centre, which pull in disciplines, researchers, institutes and countries that are not directly linked to the coordinator as they expand, thereby enhancing and enriching any previous interactions between researchers and opening the potential for new formulations of research teams for the future.
- There were pros and cons to greater standardisation:
 - an increase in the number of research partners, who were able and willing to work together at the European level; creating a broader Europe-wide constituency;
 - following a common research methodology could be stressful for researchers and in some ways limit their creativity with no scope to study new issues or questions that might arise.

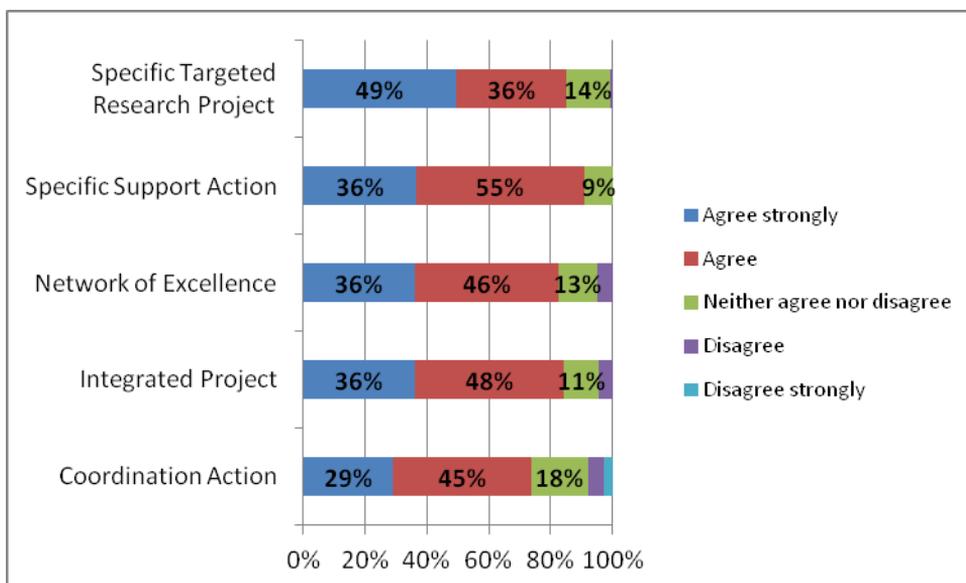
Achievement of critical mass

The appreciation of critical mass and economies of scale relates to the views presented largely by interviewees.

Critical mass – European coverage

One important aspect for critical mass in SSH relates to the extent of European coverage of the research. The findings of the online survey show that 82% of NoE respondents (n=80) strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “The FP project led to research of wider European coverage than was previously the case” and so did 85% of IP respondents (n=108).

Figure 37: The FP project led to research of wider European coverage than was previously the case



(STREP: n=148; SSA: n=22; NoE: n=80; IP: n=108; CA: n=38)

Critical mass – common methods and tools

Coordinators of 14 projects (8 NoE's and 6 IP's) as well as all project participants interviewed suggested that the Networks of Excellence and Integrated Projects achieved critical mass through the creation of common frameworks, common methods, approaches and tools. This development was seen as enabling researchers in these projects to interact on more equal terms with the more dominant research communities in the USA.

Respondents to the survey were asked for their level of agreement with the statement if the FP project led to the development of shared research methodologies, indicators, statistics, databases, etc. Ca. 68% of respondents from IPs and ca. 49% of respondents from NoEs either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Ca. 23% of respondents from IP projects and 38% from NoEs, registered a neutral opinion, and ca. 8% of respondents from NoEs and 14% of respondents from IPs disagreed with this statement. Reasons for these responses may be linked to the framing of the question which asked about the development of shared approaches/tools, which suggested the creation of new tools rather than the broadening of use of existing methods. Another set of reasons may be that NoEs do not do much research and might therefore be less intensive in using research methodologies than IPs. For example the coordinator of the Network of Excellence "EQUALSOC" argued that there was a lot of dissemination of research tools and research methods between research institutes, but that his project had not developed new methods. Rather, project participants are applying already established methods. For the coordinator, the sharing of knowledge of such methods between partner institutes was the important point.

Critical mass - Themes

According to those interviewed, increased critical mass was facilitated in the topic area through the larger number of project partners that the instruments allowed.

Some coordinators commented that in some disciplines, including but not limited to the humanities, a centralised approach had not been the norm. One coordinator commented that whereas researchers in the natural sciences had been used to repetitive work and large-scale standardised approaches to allow effective testing, in the social sciences individual researchers had been used to more personal freedom in terms of structuring and carrying out their research. However, there was agreement that the large instruments supported a structural change in the SSH field, underpinning a different research culture which is needed to support work on a Europe-wide scale.

Key findings

- Both IPs and NoEs can be considered to have achieved critical mass in terms of the creation of common frameworks, methods, approaches and tools within the topic area. Whilst some IPs facilitated creation of new approaches, NoEs established communities of researchers following a common 'language'/approach following the lead of the coordinating group.
- A structural change for many in SSH fields is related to the creation of a different research culture to support work on a Europe-wide scale project. This new culture was particularly supported by the size of the instruments, especially the Networks of Excellence. Researchers in the SSH had not been used to large-scale standardised approaches and had been used to more personal freedom.

Achievement of economies of scale

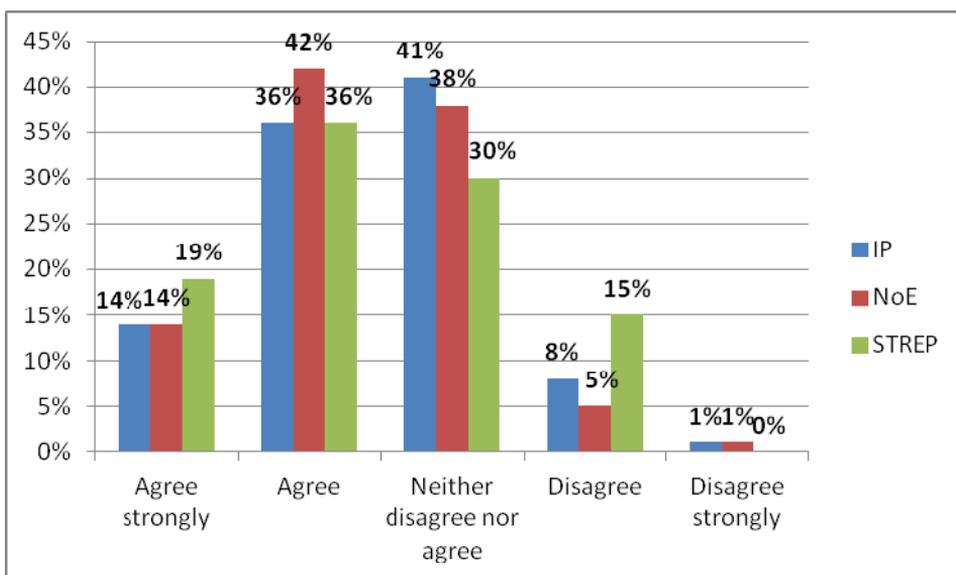
Project coordinators representing both NoEs and IPs were asked their view on whether or not the large instruments had facilitated economies of scale, which might include the avoidance of

duplication and reduced fragmentation of research efforts as well as the creation of synergies through the larger team structures involved. The notion of economies of scale was difficult to capture but interviewees, nonetheless, discussed the following benefits that resulted from the large scale of their projects:

Using research results for inputs for new projects and identification of future collaboration opportunities

Several project coordinators representing Integrated Projects, but also Networks of Excellence, highlighted that a key benefit of large scale was research results that could be used as new inputs for new research projects, as well as facilitating the identification of partners that could be effective for the future, based on actual experience (including many who may not have been viewed initially in this capacity). A key strength of the NoEs results from the knowledge brought to the networks from all participants and how this knowledge can be disseminated to external stakeholders through publications and conferences, for example.

Figure 38: FP Projects¹⁷ led to the growth of new research projects supported by other research funders



Networking with researchers from complementary research disciplines

Most coordinators found that their projects achieved economies of scale from the point of view of the research, and there appeared to be little difference in this appreciation despite the differing objectives of the two instruments, with one focused on the added value to research through networking and the other on the creation of new knowledge.

Examples of the achievement of economies of scale for the Networks of Excellence included the ability to facilitate networking beyond borders, meaning in geographic terms as well as borders of research disciplines, with researchers in complementary fields. Moreover, economies of scale were also achieved in terms of the structures created to bring researchers together around research topics/discussions which, if organised at an individual level or

¹⁷ The results relating to Coordinating Actions and Specific Support Actions were not taken into account due to the small number of responses on these instrument types (15 and 34) and the subsequent reduced relevance of these responses.

involved smaller groupings of researchers to cover the same areas, would require significantly more time to organise and ultimately achieve a more fragmented approach. However, in some cases doubts were expressed by coordinators on the ability of those at the edge of the Network to keep up and engage to the same extent as those at the different thematic hubs.

EU comparative research – greater number of possibilities for data collection and for dissemination of results plus access to more stakeholders

Other points raised by coordinators representing both Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence were that economies of scale were achieved because the instruments provided the possibility to carry out EU-wide comparative research and the collection and potential for wider scale dissemination of results, which would not otherwise be possible. This included the possibility to engage greater numbers of stakeholders, including policy makers (although there were constraints to this in many cases due to the difficulties in engaging policy makers in the research results). In addition, the benefits of interaction between researchers with different levels of experience and seniority working within the individual projects was reported by many coordinators and other participants in projects to give a rare opportunity for junior researchers to present results to the research leaders in their field. This might not be feasible for many years otherwise due to academic traditions in many countries.

Rising costs of administration and management

There was dissent from the view that the large instruments had led to economies of scale particularly in relation to the administration and management of the project. The larger size of the projects required significantly greater efforts to facilitate their management, although detailed project structures were developed with different work package leaders responsible for different aspects of the work. According to two coordinators, who mentioned this point specifically, the amount of work required to coordinate a large project did not signify that economies of scale could be achieved at that level. With regards to economies of scale at the technical/research level, only one coordinator of an Integrated Project did not identify any economies of scale, because he argued that essentially the research conducted was a comparative piece, so it was necessary to have all of the different elements/contributions, which provided different rather than overlapping perspectives.

Key findings

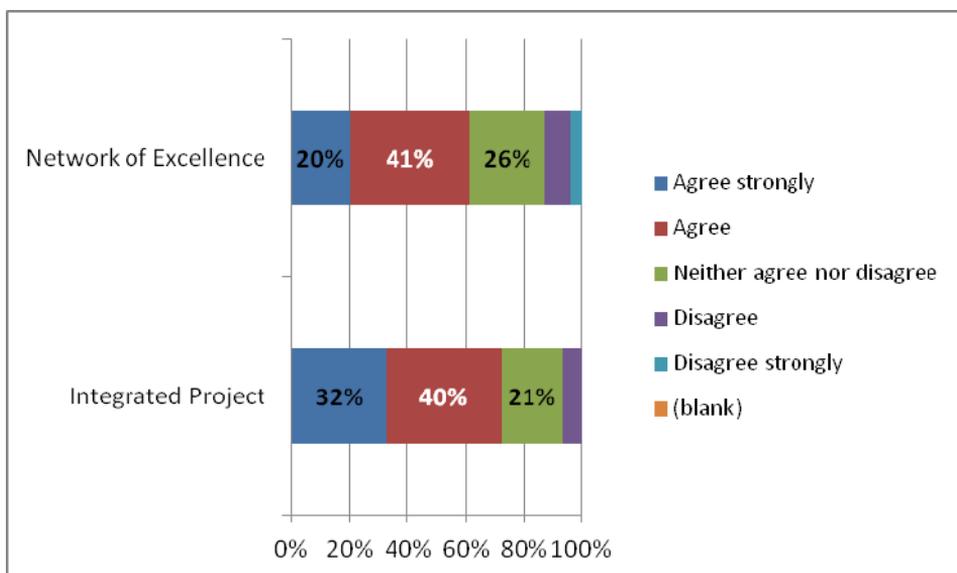
- Several coordinators found that the results produced by some IPs and NoEs could be used as new inputs for new research projects, as well as facilitate the identification of partners that could be effective for the future based on actual experience, including many who may not have been viewed initially in this capacity.
- A key strength results from the variety of knowledge being brought into the networks by individual participants and shared with external stakeholders through the dissemination of research results.
- No economies of scale can be considered to have been achieved from an administration/project management view point. The larger size of the projects required significantly greater efforts to facilitate their management.
- The creation of structures to bring together researchers in complementary but different fields on a wide scale was facilitated by the large instruments, avoiding a more fragmented approach. However, there is doubt as to whether some researchers at the edge of NoEs were able to keep up, as in some cases the networks were too broad and some partners were not as integrated as the coordinator would have liked.
- The potential for wider scale dissemination of results which would not otherwise be possible, including the possibility to engage greater numbers of stakeholders, including policy makers, was significant although it was reported to be difficult to engage the latter.

- The large instruments facilitated rare interaction between researchers with different levels of experience, giving a rare opportunity for junior researchers to present results to the research leaders in their field, and at the same time made more senior researchers also question their approach.

Integrating/structuring effects of IPs and NoEs to ERA

A reported important effect of the new instruments was that the size of projects that were enabled facilitated the collection of large amounts of new data that would never have been possible within a smaller project. Further insight into the capacity of the instruments is provided by the results of the researchers' survey, which suggests that particularly IPs led to essential research that would not have been otherwise possible (72% of IP respondents strongly agreed or agreed, and 61% of NoE respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement).

Figure 39: Essential research that would not have otherwise been possible



New way of structuring and integrating research – decentralised responsibility

One of the differences identified between these funding instruments and those instruments under FP5 was the need to effectively integrate the research efforts at different levels of the project team hierarchy, involving many more partners than would have been the case under the previous programme. In many cases, because of the complex interrelationships created with different work packages drawing on different research groups, the integration of research results tended to be a somewhat almost continuous process, as results were significant for the progress of different aspects of the projects. Some coordinators specifically commented that in former projects, for example under FP5, the integration of results was carried out by the coordinator at the end of the project. However, given the large size and the duration of projects funded under the FP6 large instruments, a new way of structuring and integrating research was necessary.

New ways of managing, administering and communicating

As discussed earlier in this section, the architecture of the team was vital to the ability of its participants to make a meaningful contribution, adding value to the other parts of the consortium. Many coordinators reported that they made use of research on organisational

structures to assist their building and management of the work. To facilitate the smooth integration of research and networking efforts many coordinators commented that the first year of the project was essentially focused on the presentation and communication of research specialisations including the state of the art in different areas and hypotheses with regard to the development of the discipline. This preparatory work was also deemed to be necessary where researchers were interacting with those in complementary fields. Other specific mechanisms were developed across projects to manage the integration of work, including the development of large databases, intra and extranets, as well as protocols for interaction between the different partners on a bi- and multilateral level.

Better understanding and appreciation of the need for European Comparative Research

At the project level a key structuring effect of the large instruments was the creation of a community of researchers, using a common vocabulary, context and methods, as well as common understanding despite linguistic or cultural barriers between researchers and research institutes. This is reported to have resulted in a change in researchers' understanding for the need of European comparative research. The significance of this community of researchers appears to be particularly high for Networks of Excellence, as the number of researchers involved was often significantly higher than in Integrated Projects. The extent that large networks created a monopoly in a particular area is debatable as it was not possible to identify within the realms of this study the extent that other research teams were tackling similar or related topics with different approaches. Most coordinators did not focus on this issue in their interviews.

Standardisation of approaches seen positively but has the potential to reduce creativity

Another issue raised by a small number of coordinators was that whilst the standardisation of approaches across projects required an increased level of discipline within the field, which was perceived to be positive, it could also reduce the potential for creativity. There was some feedback that the need to work according to a defined method was something that researchers in the social sciences and humanities were not necessarily used to and that this could reduce the creativity of researchers in these fields. However, most coordinators found that the key scientific objectives of their large instrument projects had been met.

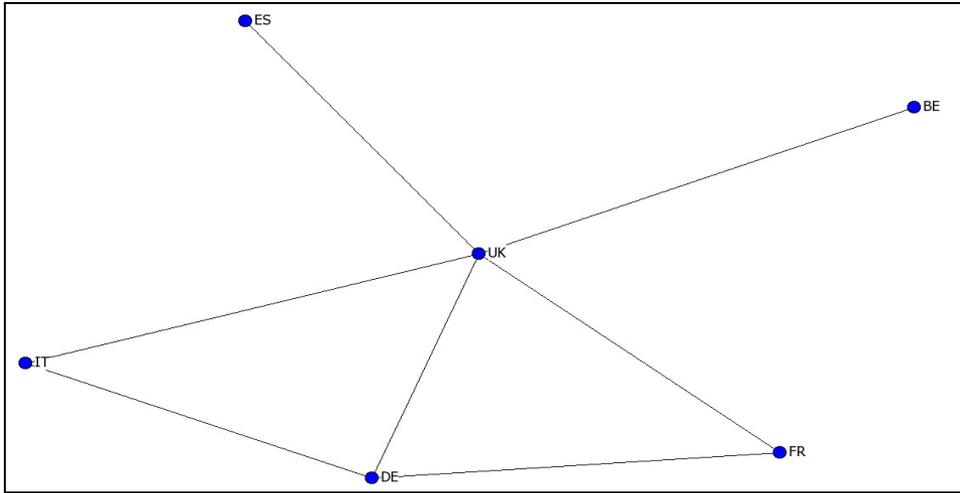
Large Instruments lead to true pan-European research

There was a general agreement among interviewees that truly comparative European-wide research was carried out by the projects funded as large instruments. This was highlighted especially in comparison to former Framework Programmes, where usually a smaller combination of countries would work together. In this context, the large instruments were perceived especially as a benefit for the newer Member States which do not have the research systems and traditions in place that western European countries have. They have experienced difficulties in securing funding under the Framework Programmes because they do not have international networks and have not contributed to international publications etc. The NoEs in particular give these countries the opportunity to gain valuable experience through these projects which would not be possible otherwise. They can improve their "international CV" and their involvement prepares them for future work under the Framework Programmes.

Policy and research strategy not seen to be influenced by ERA structuring but researchers and their institutions can be affected directly

The survey of researchers, and the interviews with coordinators and national policy makers, suggested that structuring of the European Research Area did not necessarily result in high level policy or research strategy type changes (although this differed from country to country), but that change could be seen at the level of the individual researcher and his or her research institution. Researchers did not report that the results of their research had necessarily been taken into account at the development of research policy or that their results had impacted

Figure 41: Most significant relationships generated by the large instruments between countries

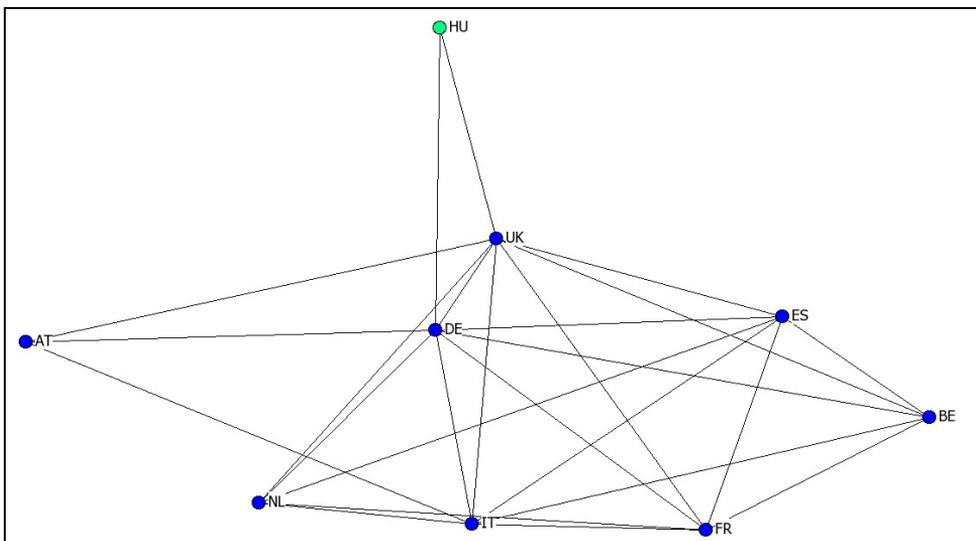


Countries of EU15 in blue

In comparison, Germany was the most significant connector of countries for the other types of instruments (CA, STREP, SSA), closely followed by Italy, which appears to have the next most significant level of involvement for the other instruments.

Other key findings are that of the smaller EU countries the Netherlands played a more significant role in the projects of the other instruments, followed by Belgium. Meanwhile for the large instruments Belgium was the most significant smaller country followed by the Netherlands and Austria which were both involved in projects with a similar level of financial significance. Differences can also be identified in terms of the involvement of the newer Member States in the large instruments and the other FP6 instruments. Whereas for STREP, CA and SSA, Poland's involvement was by far the most significant, for the large instruments Hungary's involvement was the most significant, followed by the Czech Republic and then Poland.

Figure 42: Most significant involvement of a newer Member State in the large instruments



EU15 in blue, EU-12 in green

Key findings

- The large instruments gave European researchers in the SSH the potential to develop research results with real European coverage through the involvement of numerous partners from across Europe, including Eastern European countries. This was not considered to be possible under FP5.
- The large size in terms of the number of partners and the longer duration of projects funded under the large instruments meant that a new way of structuring and integrating research was necessary with on-going integration of research results across projects rather than this being focused on the end of the process.
- The inventory of research infrastructures identified all 34 large instruments, out of a total of 42 FP6 projects examined, which led to the development of a significant research infrastructure (for example a data set), which if made accessible to the wider research community had a high level of applicability.
- The survey of researchers also suggested that a high proportion of projects supported by the large instruments developed essential research that would not have been otherwise possible (88% of IP respondents strongly agreed or agreed, and 67% of NoE respondents strongly agreed or agreed with this statement).
- The creation of a new research capacity and culture within the SSH, particularly within some specific disciplines where there was a more limited tradition of working across Member State borders, such as gender studies or migration, has resulted in the creation of a research environment which is better able to respond to the challenge of Europe-wide research.
- The involvement of newer, less experienced Member States in the large instruments, particularly the Networks of Excellence, is likely to help these countries play a greater role in future Framework Programmes through the knowledge and experience gained through participating in this FP.
- In terms of the physical structuring of research under the large instruments, the UK appears to have played the most significant role connecting other countries across the different projects; Belgium was the most significant smaller country and Hungary the most significant country from the new Member States. These results are in contrast with those when all the linkages between countries across the whole of FP6 are considered.
- A more robust approach was required to the integration of outputs than had been required under FP5. Outputs were integrated throughout projects at different levels involving different members of the consortia rather than being brought together at the end by the coordinator, as had been feasible under FP5.

Interaction with policy making

Contact and communication with European and national policy makers difficult (particularly for IPs)

In terms of the wider structuring impact of projects related to their ability to interact with the community of stakeholders relevant to their field of research, coordinators, particularly from the Integrated Projects, were concerned that their projects would not be able to meet the Commission's political objectives. Coordinators reported that contacts and communication with European and national policy makers were very difficult. There were several reasons for this. While project partners reportedly tend to be well connected to national policy makers, several coordinators still perceived it as being impossible to translate EU research findings so that they would be of relevance and interest to those at national level.

Developing outputs for policy makers difficult - specific skillset required, limited incentive to do so as there are no perceived career benefits

At the output level it was considered to be difficult to encourage researchers to invest time in developing policy briefs partly because it was perceived that different skills are required to develop this type of output and that these skills were not held by researchers. In addition, there was limited incentive to engage in this task because of the lack of added value to individual's research careers particularly in an environment where '*publish or perish*' is reported to be the norm. To cite specific cases, two coordinators from Networks of Excellence reported that they or members of their networks were asked to produce policy briefing papers and that, while they generally considered this to be a good idea, they refused to assist. The reasons given were the additional work required as well as the additional skills, which were not necessarily available for those involved. However, while no policy brief was produced in this instance, there was still some benefit in that it enabled coordinators to interact and make connections with policy makers

In addition, coordinators reported that although policy makers were invited to take part in work shops or informed of the relevance of the work being undertaken, these efforts were often met with a limited response. At the European level, two coordinators reported that there are significant difficulties in communicating the outputs of the research, because this required an effective message and channel. While the coordinators saw it being possible to formulate clear policy, they perceived finding the right channel within the European Commission as a challenge. It was also suggested to be unclear whether or not members of staff working in the EC's Directorate-Generals really have the resources to take on board the findings on EU level research.

Key findings

- There have been various barriers which have limited the potential to interact with policy makers relating to the difficulties to engage policy makers in the research carried out as well as the lack of incentive for researchers to develop policy briefs, because of the different skill set required and the lack of impact on career development.

Potential for creation of lasting impact

With one exception there was consensus among all NoE and IP coordinators interviewed that the sustainability of a project is dependent on the continuation of the funding. Without funding it is realistically not possible that the work of consortia can continue. The ability to generate other funds is linked to the topic of the research and the extent that the research is of interest to other funders. In addition, funding for multinational research was generally seen as being difficult to obtain. Thus, evidence collected through the interviews suggests that the impact of a project declines once the research activities are finished. A few coordinators stated that in this perspective there is little change from FP5 – without funding, EU structures for research cannot continue. However, the coordinator of NoE IMISCO stated that once the EC's funding of his project is ending, the project will function as an independent network funded by institutional membership. All partner institutes have committed themselves to this by signing letters of intent. The network, which has been running since 2004, was considered by the coordinator as a "unique infrastructure" for the development of innovation and research, as well as a headquarters for the training of PhD students, for publishing the results of research and to exchange data and expertise on migration. Moreover, the network also involves/makes use of an expert database and a policy maker portal. These characteristics seem to make the project particularly attractive to the institutions involved.

Integrated Projects were seen as more likely to create long lasting institutional structures between organisations and countries than Networks of Excellence. NoEs were typically perceived as resulting in benefits that are fluid and transferred through individuals as they

move around. Their lasting impact therefore lies in building lasting cooperation and thematic impact in the future. One coordinator summed this up by stating “*NoEs invest in people, in individual research careers and individual inputs to research developments*”.

Key findings

- The ability to further develop strands of the research is limited once funding has stopped from the European Commission unless it is possible to identify other funding sources, which is difficult.
- IPs may have greater links at institutional levels whereas NoEs’ strongest links tended to be developed at the level of individual researchers.

INTEGRATED PROJECTS

The following section provides a more detailed overview of respondents’ perceptions and views on the ability of their Integrated Project to achieve the objectives specific to this type of instrument, for example:

- influence on the state-of-the art;
- production of new knowledge;
- impact on collaboration and networking for researchers.

As highlighted earlier, this section presents perceptions of achievements/outcomes rather than the evaluation team’s assessment of project results. Observations therefore remain relatively high level.

Advancement of the state of the art

All coordinators of Integrated Projects interviewed agreed that the Integrated Projects had succeeded in advancing the state-of-the-art in their respective research fields by achieving significant research results, due to the wide-scale collaboration with partners who are experts in their respective fields. One coordinator stated that there were possibilities of overlap between individual research projects in one field. It was suggested that it was difficult to get in contact with other projects, and while under FP5 the European Commission had organised clustering events, which were very useful, this did not seem to exist under FP6. However, it was perceived that if the EC would take the lead and bring relevant coordinators of projects in the same field together, this could lead to significant additionality in terms of funding allocated. However, this view was not expressed by any of the other coordinators interviewed.

Integrated Projects were generally seen as enhancing the professional development of their participants through the research outputs that were produced by the individual teams. Moreover, the participation of researchers in international projects was reported to have a good reputation and to be good for the prestige of individuals. Therefore, coordinators and other participants considered that there was a clear benefit to them taking part in an Integrated Project.

In addition, project participants pointed out that Integrated Project enabled a transfer of excellence from senior to more junior researchers who are given the opportunity to take part in training provided by the knowledge leaders in their research fields.

Production of knowledge

Researchers perceived Integrated Projects as very important in giving a signal to the scientific community in terms of research topics which are regarded as being important for laying the way for future oriented European research in Social Sciences and Humanities (for example in

linguistics). In addition, IPs were not only seen as making the scientific community aware of research interest, but also national authorities which might take these European research topics more seriously at a national level.

IPs were seen as being much more outreaching than smaller projects. For example, research results achieved through IPs have been disseminated mostly via publications as well as through conferences and workshops, which have been accessible to researchers outside the consortia as well as policy makers, the civil society and the public at large. This kind of reaching outside the project to the communities directly interested in the respective research areas, as generated by the IPs, was seen as one of the main differences between Integrated Projects and funding instruments under FP5. Only two project coordinators interviewed stated that they experienced difficulties with the dissemination of their research, due to confidentiality and to financial reasons, which as a result limited the “outreach” of their results. However, the full extent and the impact of the dissemination of knowledge of Integrated Projects can only be assessed after all research results have been collected and the projects have completely finished.

Impact of instrument on collaboration/networking

One of the participants in an IP had taken part in two STREP projects before. He reported that these two projects had been shorter in time and had been tightly defined from the start in terms of their scope. In comparison, the IP offered a lot more freedom, with the research agenda being more open and flexible, even though a general framework and a time agenda are assigned.

Evidence collected during the interviews also suggests that an important aspect of participation in IPs, particularly for more junior researchers, is the training. For example, researchers at doctoral level, i.e. undertaking their PhD, get the opportunity to carry out research and disseminate their results. In addition, the organisation of events which are devoted to PhD students are a good opportunity for junior researchers to meet other researchers. While in the academic world it is quite usual for senior researchers to speak at conferences, the idea here is that junior researchers present their research findings, and create their own networks with junior as well as senior researchers from different research areas. The networking opportunities that stem from participating in the IPs were perceived to be a great advantage of this type of European research initiative. These opportunities for junior researchers added value to their professional development and allow for the formation of personal networks with other researchers cross-field.

Overall, Integrated Projects were seen as a catalyst for long-lasting collaboration, at least to the extent that all project coordinators as well as participants interviewed stated that they will work with at least some of their consortium partners in the future, depending on common research interests or common methodologies. However, it seems unlikely that the same consortia will form again, due to the likely lack of funding of large-size European projects and due to the fact that the new research themes that are opened up through the research do not necessarily warrant the involvement of the same partners. In this context, three coordinators pointed out that the new FP7 programme threatened the legacy of the large instruments, because it went back to funding smaller projects. It was suggested that smaller projects make it impossible especially for newer, smaller and less experienced research institutes to participate, given that researchers working there might be less well-known and less experienced in European research consortia. The consequence is that those institutes benefit and are set to continue working together which have already established themselves in certain research areas.

Key findings

- Aside from the burden of complying with the administrative and reporting requirements of the funding instrument, and the difficulties resulting from budget cuts, no significant negatives were outlined by those that took part in the Integrated Projects. There is likely to be some bias in this result, given that interviewees voluntarily decided to take part in the interviews as well as the survey. However, the majority of views expressed presented a relatively consistent picture of the way that the IPs had functioned in practice.
- Coordinators considered that their projects had led to advances in the state of the art and this was backed up by the researchers' survey where 84% of respondents involved in IPs (mainly work package leaders) either agreed or agreed strongly with the proposal that the project had led to significant advances in the state of the art.
- Although findings from the researcher survey suggest a similar level of appreciation of the STREP instrument as Integrated Projects, a key added value appears to have been greater potential offered by IPs with their longer time frame and additional budget scope being perceived as offering greater flexibility.
- Integrated Projects are considered to be a catalyst for long-lasting collaboration between some of the consortium partners in the future, depending on common research interests or common methodologies and their performance in the projects.
- The training potential of Integrated Projects was particularly significant for more junior researchers, although this frequently (but not always) came in the form of "on the job" rather than specific formal training.

NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE

The following section provides a more detailed overview of respondents' perceptions and views on the Networks of Excellence, their impact on network formation, the quality of research undertaken and the level of exchange between partners, as well as the impact on collaboration.

Network formation

Networks of Excellence were seen as being an effective tool for network formations which did not exist before, due to the establishment of new contacts. Moreover, NoEs had the capacity to merge different networks which would usually work separately. At the same time, they were seen as permitting a large multiplicity of themes and a vast cultural diversity, and as providing an excellent link between research and dissemination of that research.

All coordinators of NoEs agreed that a progressive integration of network partners' activities is possible through the coordination and sharing of theoretical and methodological issues, through identifying parallel and crosscutting aspects, and proposing new strategic lines of research. One coordinator stressed the fact that the diversity of research among partners needed to be maintained within NoEs, otherwise the added value of the projects would be low. Individual coordinators thought that the structuring effect of NoEs can be considered to be the continued evolution and development of contacts as well as the continuing input to publications in high quality journals.

When forming the networks, all coordinators stated that they involved some partner institutes with whom they had collaborated before. One coordinator even argued that a NoE under FP6 cannot be developed without previous networking experience gained during a project under FP5. Other partners involved might be strategically chosen to fill gaps. Individual coordinators stated that they also involved non-official partners, giving them associated status to avoid lengthy procedures to participate.

There was an agreement among coordinators interviewed that the NoEs encourage researchers to go beyond their “comfort zones” of networking and significantly extend their contacts both inside their research field and within complementary areas. Given the geographic spread of networks established there was a great sense of the networks being “European”, rather than bringing together established contacts within a smaller group of countries. One coordinator even argued that the institutes working together in his project are the leading group in Europe in their field, and easily match research groups in the US or elsewhere.

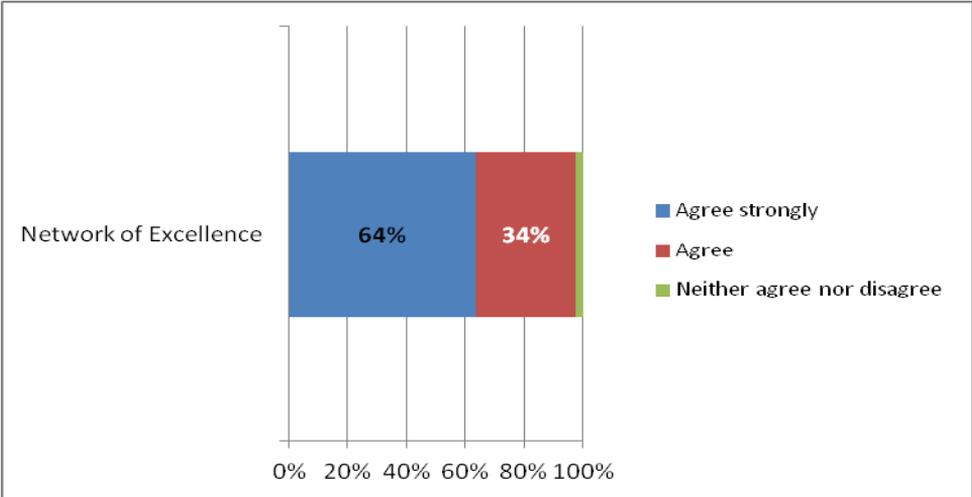
While three coordinators found that the size of the networks was so big that it caused management difficulties, the majority of coordinators argued that the large number of project participants added value to the networks. There was agreement that smaller networks end up being like “old boys” clubs, meaning that the same research institutes tend to form groups. The added value of such a formation was seen as limited and the formation of large networks was seen as one of the main advantages of NoEs compared to projects funded under FP5.

Coordinators as well as project participants found that the networking coordination structure is of great importance for the network formation and the success of the NoEs. A good organisation and coordination of the different work packages is necessary to avoid the free-riding of individual partners. Moreover, an effective management structure was seen as essential to allow the project to move forward because of the extremely high volume of work. One coordinator reported that at the outset of his project, colleagues in different disciplines found it difficult to communicate and work together, but that throughout the project channels were built to different disciplines which brought unexpected outcomes to those involved.

Networking

Networks of Excellence were seen to significantly increase the network opportunities of project participants. These views are supported by the survey findings. Respondents to the survey confirmed that their involvement in NoEs had increased their networking opportunities as highlighted by the chart below¹⁹ and led to new contacts useful for the development of the research (98% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed).

Figure 43: Increased volume of networking opportunities



¹⁹ Percentages have been rounded to zero decimal points.

NoEs were also seen to promote excellence and integration. Coordinators as well as project participants agreed that NoEs increased excellence by allowing for a rich interchange among network members through meetings and sharing of information, and then converging this into usable deliverables and publications. While coordinators stated that NoEs did not fund new research as such, they still led to the development of enriched data through new publications and facilitated the gathering of knowledge. The funding for new research elements within the Networks of Excellence is rather limited. However, participants of NoEs see the combination of the networks with new research elements as an improvement in the future.

Junior researchers were seen as having unparalleled networking opportunities by gaining access to researchers in prominent positions. For some researchers this is a highly unusual and rewarding experience. One coordinator, however, reported that the unexpected outcomes of his project has included the fact that it is not only the young and less experienced researchers who have gained in terms of training and learning, but that also the senior researchers have had their ideas challenged by younger team members who come with different approaches, ways of looking at things and sources of evidence. Most coordinators also reported that their projects organise summer schools, allowing junior researchers to make connections with senior fellows, but also to network with their peers across Europe.

Quality of research

Coordinators as well as project participants agreed that there was a high level of exchange and interchange of network partners in the NoEs. Cross cluster initiatives were established which aimed to lead to common research results. There is a lot of dissemination of tools and research methods between the different research institutes involved in one network, and this interchange increases the excellence of the networks. A challenge related to the fact that not all work packages within a NoE would evolve in the same way. Some might be more successful than others, and synchronisation of the project cycle required flexibility to adjust plans, objectives and deliverables of the different work packages accordingly.

The majority of coordinators stated that successful networking automatically attracts researchers in the field to participate. The NoEs allowed for a certain level of freedom to go beyond the network itself, meaning that the networks were opened to others, for example by inviting researchers outside the networks to workshops and conferences. Coordinators also encouraged work package leaders to bring in other researchers, which were added on an informal basis to avoid the administrative “red tape” when new additions to the networks were requested. It was not possible during this evaluation to assess the quality of the networking process, or the contribution to the research being undertaken, although, as highlighted before, realistically there could be different levels of engagement with the network for those at the periphery. However, this was not perceived to influence the overall impact generated by the network.

Impact of instrument on collaboration/networking

The large administrative burden necessary for the coordination in NoEs was seen as the main constraint of the NoEs for coordinators. Reportedly smaller universities and research teams, especially had difficulties in coping with this limitation.

Moreover, in a few cases the money allocated for the project was perceived as not being sufficient, meaning that a few projects had to work with students who could only be engaged for a year and then had to move on. The result was that any knowledge of the working process gained was lost.

While all coordinators stated that they had worked with at least some of their consortium partners before and saw their cooperation in the projects as essential to ensure reliability, future collaborations with at least some partners seem to be very likely. Thus, NoEs are

definitely a catalyst for long lasting collaboration. Almost all coordinators interviewed regretted that NoEs are no longer used in FP7.

Key findings:

- As foreseen in their objectives, Networks of Excellence facilitated non existing linkages and consolidating links between existing sub networks. The bringing together of diverse research disciplines and themes is an important contribution of Networks of Excellence to the SSH community.
- As witnessed with the Integrated Projects, there tended to be a core of partners in each network who had already worked together in some capacity. In some cases networks were built upon previously existing projects which may have been funded elsewhere.
- There seemed to have been pros and cons to the size of the networks that this instrument facilitated. More unlikely alliances could be formed pushing researchers outside their “comfort zone” to share their work with those in other disciplines or schools of thought. It seems that this had the potential to break the deadlock of small exclusive clubs/networks of researchers. However, coming along with the large size of the projects was the administrative burden, which many coordinators pointed out.
- The Networks of Excellence appeared to be a flexible tool allowing the broader research community to engage in the many workshops and meetings arranged. The extent that those at the edge of very large networks were really able to engage is not clear. Some networks might have been too large and not able to integrate all participants to the extent that coordinators and/or participants would have liked.
- Perhaps due to their size, the exposure of young researchers to senior researchers and vice versa seems to have been even greater within the Networks of Excellence than within the Integrated Projects and this perhaps related to the fact that the IPs were driven by a need to produce ambitious strides forward in their research fields, whereas the NoEs were not able to support actual research and, therefore, could take a more flexible approach to the inclusion of more junior researchers.
- As with the Integrated Projects, the interest in developing policy type materials to brief and engage those within national administrations remained low unless this was in the format of existing research documentation which could be shared. Again, the main reason was the lack of experience and difficulties in engaging in a written and face-to-face format with this stakeholder group.

RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES (INCLUDING LARGE COMPARATIVE DATA SETS; TOOLS ET AL)

Introduction

One of the objectives of the evaluation study quoted in the Terms of Reference (ToR) requires an assessment of “*The influence of European research programmes in SSH on the creation of capacities for European research in SSH through infrastructures....*”. The ToR pose three questions in relation to Research Infrastructures:

- to what extent have the FP5 and FP6 research programmes in SSH contributed to the **development of comparative research in Europe** in terms of methodology, **infrastructures** and training?
- to what extent have the projects supported by FP5 and FP6 under the broader heading “research infrastructures” **provided such infrastructures for European researchers outside the consortia**? (Note: refers only to SSH thematic programme)
- are there **potentially important** tools/methods/**infrastructures** (e.g. comparative European datasets) **developed by projects** other than those designated as “research infrastructures” (Note: only within SSH thematic programme)

Development of the inventory of datasets and large scale tools

As part of the desk research undertaken during the first phase of the evaluation study, the evaluation team built up an **inventory** of European data-sets and large scale tools created by FP6 projects within the funding lines of Infrastructure Projects, Networks of Excellence and Integrated Projects in SSH. The information used comprised Technical Annexes (TA) and Interim, Activity or Final Reports of 42 projects under FP6 and a further 9 infrastructure projects under FP5. The objective was to evaluate large data-sets from the perspective of European research infrastructures and determine their usefulness for the broader European community of researchers. The list of projects comprised the new instruments (i.e. Networks of Excellence and Integrated Projects) which were newly launched under FP6 and, in combination with the already existing instruments such as STREPs, were driven by the concepts of ERA and were also characterised by the structuring and integrating effects that they could have on European research.

Evaluating the large datasets and their wider usefulness

The evaluation team carried out a review of the Technical Annexes plus the Interim, Activity and Final Reports of 42 projects under FP6 in order to identify large data-sets or infrastructures that have been or are about to be produced by the individual projects. The objective of this task was to identify data-sets and their purpose as described in the Technical Annex of the project, and then to identify the information on the significance and usefulness of the data-set, as described in the reporting of the Interim/Activity/Final Reports of the project, i.e. if the data-set was described as an achievement or an important component of the reporting of the project.

In total, the evaluation team identified 27 data-sets and 6 infrastructures when going through the Technical Annexes of the projects.

Defining infrastructure and datasets

Research infrastructures were defined by the Expert Group set up by the Commission on instruction of the Council of Ministers in 2001 as “*providers of essential services to the research community*”, but there was recognition that a definition of European significance was

still evolving. Even at this time it was felt that non-obvious infrastructures such as databases and museum collections should be included. The Expert Group's work led to the formation of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI).

The report for ESFRI by the ad hoc Working Group on Research Infrastructure in the Humanities and Social Sciences (SSH) – Blueprint for the European Research Observatory for the Humanities and Social Sciences (EROHS) – stated in May 2004 that *“as in other sciences, data are provided through research infrastructures. The humanities and social sciences are thus currently not without research infrastructures. Indeed, the disciplines are supported by a wide array of very different research infrastructures, such as cross-sectoral or cohort databases based on surveys or administrative registers, museum collections, libraries, linguistic corpora and citation indices. Such research infrastructures also come in all shapes and sizes and on different geographical levels.....”* In a later report (2006) on the European Roadmap for Research Infrastructures, ESFRI considered that *“the definition of Research Infrastructures including the associated human resources covers major equipment or sets of instruments as well as knowledge-containing resources such as collections, archives and databases”*.

For the purposes of the evaluation the term “dataset” was defined as follows:

“A database or data-set contains regularly updated data, presented in tables or other forms, which allows users to easily formulate a query by selecting criteria in combination with the specific information fields available, and to view the results on the screen and/or print-out.”

The recognition that a project had produced or was producing an infrastructure or dataset covered by such above definitions was a key factor in including a project in the inventory.

The rationale for Case Studies

The ToR for the evaluation specified that earlier stage results as outlined above on the development of the inventory should be used to “select case studies to address issues of broader importance of comparative research data-sets, methods, tools and training” and that a minimum of three such studies should be carried out. The aim was to illustrate different ways whereby thematic SSH projects contributed to the building of European research infrastructures and whether in the Social Sciences and Humanities these are truly important for European science, or for the European Research Area

The case studies were used to conduct a deeper review of SSH research infrastructures developed under the SSH programme. It was intended that the case studies to be undertaken should build on the review of evidence that had already been collected (mainly from the desk research and online survey of coordinators). The baseline position for starting the process of selecting the case studies was therefore the typology of infrastructures coming from the analysis of the inventory. In addition, the approach of the ESFRI roadmap was a factor in considering the selection of Case Studies.

Further reviewing of the inventory datasets

A further assessment of the value, current and potential relevance of the datasets was developed in order to achieve a short list of candidate case study projects. This involved telephone interviews with project coordinators of those projects that were identified as having produced datasets, drawing especially upon Technical Annexes, Interim and Final Reports, and taking account of the results of an on-line survey of coordinators and work package leaders. Expert advice was also sought from Professor Kevin Schurer, (Director of the UK Social Science Data Archive and coordinator of the ESFRI project CESSDA). The following criteria were considered uppermost when undertaking these assessments:

- accessibility of datasets/infrastructures to users from outside the project partners

- potential for impact of any infrastructure created on the Social Sciences and Humanities community in Europe and beyond
- assessment of the significance and usefulness of datasets across the project consortium as well as to researchers and policy-makers outside the consortium
- evidence of attention to quality, on-going maintenance and sustainability for the future.
- completeness of the host projects or their principal outputs as announced in project reports to the Commission in information communicated by project consortia to those outside the project, for example on project web sites.
- recognition of the synchrony of the project with particular Work Programme and/or Call objectives and recognition of the type of funding instrument used.

The following case studies were selected²⁰:

- **EUROCCUPATIONS:** *'Developing a detailed 8-country occupations database for comparative socio-economic research in the European Union'* is a Specific Targeted Research Project (STREP) which has the creation of an infrastructure as its objective in order to improve the existing infrastructure position for comparative research.
- **IMISCOE:** *'International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe'* is a Network of Excellence (NoE) organising research resources in a cluster of policy-informing activities. The infrastructure portal is put together by the researchers to allow them to cooperate and position their work in order to promote it to policy-makers.
- **CHALLENGE:** *'The Changing Landscape of European Liberty and Security'* is an Integrated Project (IP) that is considered to have generated an impressive collection of scholarly resources. The resulting collaborative work is portrayed on a comprehensive website, which can be viewed as a platform displaying outcomes rather than an infrastructure in the traditional sense.
- **ECHO:** *'European Cultural Heritage On-line'* is a FP5 STREP funded for 18 months as a pilot study only that is also linked to the ESFRI roadmap through the project DARIAH. It represents a Case Study example focussed on the humanities though it has been resourced and supported primarily from the Max Planck organisation's resources in Germany. It provides an internet-based archive that can be used to deposit a vast range of artefacts held by institutions both Europe-wide and beyond that.
- **ESS:** the *'European Social Survey'* is supported by a series of STREPs in FP5 and FP6 as well as ESF and individual MS Research Councils. It provides an excellent example of the ESFRI concept and is a classic model of research infrastructure in the Social Sciences.

The selection of CHALLENGE, IMISCOE, EUROCCUPATIONS, ECHO and the ESS ensured coverage of large and small instruments, social sciences and humanities, projects launched as infrastructures, and projects that have been taken up by the ESFRI Roadmap of European Research Infrastructures. Together these projects exemplify a broad range of infrastructure functions for research communities:

- providing primary data (ESS);
- making data (sources) widely accessible (ECHO);

²⁰ The four case studies involved on-site visits and interviews. In addition, an analysis was undertaken on the outcomes of the European Social Survey (ESS).

- classifying large scale data sets and treating data so that they are ready for other people to analyse (EUROCCUPATIONS); and,
- building large scale libraries-creating resources for a particular community for processed data (CHALLENGE and IMISCOE).

5.1.3 Essential features of the selected Case Studies

When considering the contribution of each selected case study to a portrayal of SSH Research Infrastructures particular attributes were kept in mind. These included:

- underlying features of the project and the origination of the idea(s) behind this
- the particular objectives of the project
- how the project was implemented including data acquisition and the nature of the infrastructure to be created
- outputs of the project and their accessibility and use
- outcomes of the project
- intrinsic difficulties or advantages concerning the delivery of the project
- how the future is seen

The essential features of each Case Study are set out below as one of the components in considering Research Infrastructures in SSH.

EUROCCUPATIONS

Project origination and overall outline

Research Area 8 has four inter-related S&T objectives and EUROCCUPATIONS particularly addresses the second of these, notably: *“Activities in this domain aim to facilitate the further development of European infrastructures for comparative research in the SSH, through targeted actions that add value to the creation of infrastructures and facilitate their use over and beyond the specific needs of particular themes and disciplines (...). In this way, these activities are intended to complement relevant initiatives in the context of the program Structuring the European Research Area, Support for Research Infrastructures”*. EUROCCUPATIONS addresses Research Area 8.2.2., of the FP6 SSH programme in which overall objectives are *“to promote and support comparative research through the development and diffusion of tools, methodologies, research designs and large scale data-sets of wide applicability for comparative research and across disciplines”*.

EUROCCUPATIONS addresses these objectives, because its aim was to create a publicly available database of occupations, which would add value to the research infrastructure for comparative research in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

Implementation approach

EUROCCUPATIONS aimed to build a publicly available occupations database, including information on approximately 1,500 occupations in 8 European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, UK)..

Eight expert groups were established with one expert group per cluster of occupations, namely:

- care; welfare;
- education; childcare; research;
- technology; manufacturing (incl. mining);
- crafts & trade (including construction); agriculture, nature & fishing (incl. animal care);
- services;
- transport, communications, travel;
- professional occupations;
- administration, clerical occupations.

EUROCCUPATIONS additionally developed a toolkit for use by other countries to match their occupations to data in the EUROCCUPATIONS database. Now there are 45 countries involved.

Nature of the infrastructure created

Occupation is a key variable in social research, particularly in research on the labour market, transitions from school to work, social stratification, gender wage gaps, occupational structures or skill requirements. Classifications of industries and education are EU harmonized, but occupational classifications are not. Most comparative, large-scale socioeconomic datasets provide only highly aggregated, single digit information about occupations. In addition, tools are absent to collect comparable, disaggregated and reliable data on occupations across countries, be it large-scale surveys or case-studies. This was the problem that was addressed in EUROCCUPATIONS.

For all occupations the EUROCCUPATIONS database includes ISCO and NOC occupation codes, occupational titles and education code. For 150 benchmark occupations, it holds information about job content, required skill level, and competencies gathered both via existing databases and via experts from interested organisations and social science researchers. The network of experts involved comes from employers organisations, professional bodies, trade unions, vocational training institutes in the partner MS, as well as from FP6 consortia, data collecting institutes, statistical agencies, and social science researchers.

Operation and usage of the infrastructure

Users and stakeholders were important for EUROCCUPATIONS as a source of valuable information about occupations and as future users of the database so a pool of experts and users was built from the start of the project. Experts had knowledge about occupations or groups of occupations within the countries involved in EUROCCUPATIONS. Users included representatives of the relevant consortia funded in Priority 7 projects, the social science research community in the EU, national statistical agencies, employment agencies, European bodies such as Cedefop (the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions.

The EUROCCUPATIONS database was tested for its usability and its search facilities for self-administered surveys, and for text-based reporting of occupation recoding programmes. In addition, the database was checked for possible gender and skill bias. It was promoted among the European research community and institutions in the European labour market by means of a website, offline versions of the database, conferences, web-based discussion platforms, and email newsletters.

EUROCCUPATIONS is open to countries outside Europe and the general public at large. The database operates as an Excel file which can be downloaded so that, any user can use it, and

for new countries an instructions file is available. Although it is not possible to count exact usage numbers there is a lot of traffic/high number of visitors to the site. The database is picked up by web portals worldwide.

Efforts have been made to promote the database to potential users and training presentations have also been provided.

Outcomes

The main output is that the work done has generated a standardised list of around 1600 occupations and this was considered to cover the vast majority of occupations. The database is a tool that can be used in web surveys and a standard nomenclature has been developed which can be used for this. So an infrastructure system has been created from the original 8 participants that others can make use of.

The database is of importance for cross-national surveys not for national surveys. It is this comparative aspect that is the real European added value (EAV). From this standpoint there are considered to be no 'competitors' to the database. The ISCO classification for occupations only includes 400 whereas EUROCCUPATIONS provides 1600. Also ISCO does not include a search tree. This is necessary in order to be able to search on 1600 occupations and so is a feature of the EUROCCUPATIONS database.

European unification poses challenges to policy makers. National (and cultural) differences in occupational structures within the EU exist and are recognised, but insight into similarities in occupational structures and how these may differ between national contexts was lacking, because of the absence of an integrated occupations database including detailed occupational information. At a policy level EUROCCUPATIONS has addressed this gap. It has facilitated communication about occupational structures within the EU by recognising distinctiveness - for example that required educational entry levels and competences vary between different countries. So it provides insight on both similarities and differences in occupational structures within the EU. Such information is indispensable for policy-making at a European level with regard to employment policies, policies to reduce gender wage gaps and the international comparability of credentials.

The future

At present it seems that the database will be maintained as the EUROCCUPATIONS website by the Wage Indicator Foundation – a non-profit organisation established under Dutch law in 2003. In practice The WageIndicator started in 2001 in The Netherlands as Loonwijzer.nl. In 2004 relatives developed in 8 other European countries. Essentially all WageIndicators share the same concept.

However other EU programmes/institutions may be used for seeking support as well. For example the project coordinator is currently in discussion with EURES (the European Employment Agency).

Conclusions

- The key objective of the EUROCCUPATIONS project was to generate an infrastructure that is accessible to anyone outside the project wishing to make use of it and this has been achieved.
- EUROCCUPATIONS contributes significantly, even exclusively, to developing comparative research in Europe through the infrastructure generated and the associated methodologies and training provided to facilitate its use.

IMISCOE

Project origination and overall outline

International migration, into and within the EU, is a fundamental issue of politics and policy today. It is set to remain so for years to come, for reasons that lie both inside and outside Europe. This will have far-reaching consequences for the Member States (MS) and for the EU as a whole. In 2003 certain scientists developed the idea of obtaining NoE funding from the FP6 SSH Programme (Research Area 3.1.1) with certain objectives in mind which concurred with the FP6 strategic aim of supporting and developing the social sciences and the humanities in relation to migration, immigration and multiculturalism. The particular aim was to provide comprehensive theoretical and empirical knowledge that could form a reliable basis for policy, so 19 established research institutes in 10 European countries established a Network of Excellence (NoE) in the domain of International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE).

IMISCOE partners were aware that the state of research on the issue of international migration and integration was highly fragmented. Such research was oriented predominantly to national contexts and it lacked a secure infrastructure which might help formulate adequate answers to wider European problems. The pressing need for a workable, enduring European research infrastructure was widely recognised - a network that would strengthen EU-wide cooperation in this research domain and that could draw together all the complementary expertise that had developed so far, and stimulate joint cross-national comparative research endeavours.

Implementation approach

The task of IMISCOE was to build an infrastructure for research in the domain of international migration, integration and social cohesion by developing a coherent, multi-disciplinary cross-national comparative research programme. Furthermore it had to develop an infrastructure for training of future researchers and a system of dissemination of results of research to a wide audience.

The approach taken by the IMISCOE Programme was characterised by the following methodological principles:

- comparison to be used as a systematic methodology.
- the approach to be multidisciplinary.
- the special expertise of each member to be put to strategic use in developing a multi-national research programme.
- the programme to have an explicit policy orientation

Since its inception in 2004 IMISCOE has worked to provide a unique infrastructure for migration researchers to jointly develop innovative research programmes and publish the results of their research, to promote high-quality training for Ph.D students and to offer worldwide access to a wide variety of migration research, data and expertise.

Nature of the infrastructure created

For the organisation of research all members were brought together into **Research Clusters and Cross Cluster Working Groups**. In these clusters and working groups members exchanged information on their current research activities and findings and then made strategic choices to build a coherent research programme in their domain. A variety of activities were undertaken in this process including the organisation of workshops, publication of books and other strategic instruments to develop new research and stimulation of theory building and development of methodologies.

So establishing such Clusters led to generating work packages and formulation of new

research projects as outcomes. Such networking or clustering was found to have several dimensions. What started as a communication network could end up as a solid infrastructure for formulating or incubating new research ideas. It was considered important to have such a platform on which to function in this way. It was the intention to try to combine very specific fields to generate new techniques and approaches. So cross-cluster initiatives were established which aimed at generating common research proposals from a range of inputs that would be developed and be submitted as proposals to FP7 or elsewhere.

Operation and usage of the infrastructure

A network coordinator for a project such as IMISCOE would see the creation of an infrastructure in terms of, for example, building common and durable facilities of coordination, specialization, training and dissemination; and developing expertise within the European Research Area as a whole by training and engaging new members, thereby enlarging the coverage of the Network. An additional objective would be to identify best practices in the field of international migration, immigrant integration and social cohesion as well as spreading excellence and training.

In the field of IMISCOE's activity there is limited opportunity to build up datasets, which anyway would usually be intermediary or facilitating. So there is no particular dataset as an output from IMISCOE activities but rather a set of Work Packages and/or gestating research ideas some of which might contain data.

Project outcomes

IMISCOE is an academic network – it works from the strength of its knowledge and provides portal access to data sources and other information through which new research ideas can be generated.

IMISCOE also serves the needs of others, including IMISCOE and non-IMISCOE institutions interested in an intensive training programme for a group of PhD students and other early-stage researchers, or their institutions, that have not yet joined the network but that are nonetheless interested in catching up with the state of the art in the field of international migration and integration. Such 'crash courses' lasting three to seven days, are offered on site and are therefore relatively inexpensive. Furthermore IMISCOE maintains an online library of key publications and a people/expert database which is very broad. The ownership of such data is public and there is open access to it. There is also a web portal for policy-making interests and an IMISCOE newsletter.

An infrastructure has been built but it is in the form of a platform of researchers with shared interests and concerns that are able to progress knowledge in this difficult and sensitive field. Sub-platforms have also been created as part of this effort focussed for example on the creation of research programmes, facilities for research coordination, research training and research communication and dissemination.

These infrastructural platforms are not particularly compatible with the ESFRI infrastructure models with a focus in the social sciences and humanities on datasets and access to these. However the platforms created are of real value to ERA and as a contribution to European comparative research.

The future

IMISCOE will carry on after its FP6 funding comes to an end on 31 March 2010 and will function from then as an independent network that is funded by its institutional membership. The IMISCOE Board of Directors has expressed its appreciation for the valuable collective of migration and integration researchers that IMISCOE has become and unanimously decided that the network should persevere. So in autumn 2008, all 23 IMISCOE member institutes committed themselves to a 'new IMISCOE' by signing letters of intent. The rationale for

institutes to join, besides the excellence of the network, is the fact that IMISCOE became a kind of incubator for new projects so this has helped to generate interest in signing up. Named the IMISCOE Research Network, this future incarnation of IMISCOE was officially established at a constitutive meeting on 9 April 2009 in Brussels.

Conclusions

- IMISCOE was not a project designated under “research infrastructures” but nevertheless produced a platform of activities and interactions that serves as an excellent portal of entry to the topic area. In this sense it constitutes an important tool for those both inside and outside the project consortium. The project also should qualify as an infrastructure because it provides access to a range of information including data sources and methodologies that can underpin further research.
- The essence of the IMISCOE network was to underpin comparative research not least because the areas of immigration and social cohesion had a strong national orientation that made it difficult to develop research on a comparative basis. IMISCOE overcame this problem. Access to the infrastructural platform of activities and the methodologies involved together with training opportunity confirm a potentially significant contribution from IMISCOE.

CHALLENGE

Project origination and overall outline

CHALLENGE is an Integrated Project financed in FP6 under the Theme 6.1.1 of Priority 7, “Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-based Society”. The research project aims at developing adequate conceptual, substantive and policy tools to enable a knowledge-based society to better understand security issues in an enlarging Europe, while at the same time providing a framework for policy responses to future security crises. It created an Observatory charged with analysis and evaluation of the changing relationship between liberty and security in Europe.

The general objectives of CHALLENGE can be summarised as follows:

- to understand the merging between internal and external security and evaluate the changing character of the relationship between liberty and security in Europe.
- to analyse the role of different institutions in charge of security and their current transformation.
- to facilitate and enhance a new interdisciplinary network of scholars who have been influential in the re-conceptualising and analysis of many of the theoretical, political, sociological, legal and policy implications of new forms of violence and political identity.
- to bring together a new interdisciplinary network of scholars in an integrated project focusing on the state of exception as enacted through illiberal practices and forms of resistance to it.

So in summary CHALLENGE seeks to provide a critical assessment of the liberties of citizens and others living within the EU and how they are affected by the proliferation of discourse and concerns about insecurity.

Implementation approach

CHALLENGE is composed of 23 universities and research institutes from across the European Union. The management structure separated scientific and administrative coordination as distinct functions. Implementation plans were developed year by year with identified deliverables from the various Work Packages.

The project is organized around four sorts of questions which are central to the evolving security dynamic and its relationship with liberty in Europe:

Conceptual: A historical analysis of the institutionalization of exceptionalism as a practice of modern states; an examination of the ways in which the contemporary re-articulation and disaggregation of borders implies a re-articulation, de-territorialisation and dispersal of practices of exceptionalism; an analysis of the changing relation between new forms of war and defence, new procedures for policing and governance, and new threats to civil liberties and social cohesion; and thus an analysis of the competing principles that are likely to guide judgments about the emergence of illiberal practices within liberal societies. Such principles are examined especially in relationship to an understanding that Europe is not just “in Europe,” and that the conditions of European security are linked to movements between Europe and “the developing world” and the “global market,”

Empirical: (i) The Observatory - mapping the merging between internal and external security and their transnational relationships with regard to national political life; (ii) Sociology/Economy - analyzing new vulnerabilities (targeted others, critical infrastructures) and social in-cohesion (such as the perception of other religious groups, etc)

Governance/Polity/Legal: The dangers to liberty under conditions of violence when the state no longer has the last word on the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence; the danger that “technical responses” reproduce the old habit of seeking greater control in the name of exceptional circumstances; questions about the changing relation between violence and risk; how violence works today if the old interstate wars are no longer understood to be the paradigmatic form of violence; and the effects of new patterns of liberty and security, or their absence, on the contemporary political imagination.

Policy: an examination of the implications of the dispersal of exceptionalism for the changing relationship between: government departments concerned with Security, Justice and Home Affairs; the securing of state borders; and the policing of foreign interventions; etc.

Seventeen Work Packages were developed over five phases most embracing the above approach. The Observatory and coordination roles constituted certain of these Work Packages:

Nature of the infrastructure created

The CHALLENGE infrastructure can be thought of as a platform of scholars working on areas of common interest. Those involved could come from very different professional positions ranging for example across social sciences research, religion, human rights, legal, regulatory, enforcement issues that would not usually work together on liberty and security concerns. It was foreseen as a tool for setting high standards of intellectual debate around such issues in Europe. The individual partners represented institutions generally making significant research contributions in their field.

As mentioned above the project created as one Work Package an interdisciplinary Observatory as an open and accessible tool conceived to follow the analysis and evaluation of the changing relationship between security, stability and liberty in an enlarged EU. The purpose of the Observatory is to follow in detail the changes that are occurring to the concept of security and the relationship between danger and freedom. The CHALLENGE website (www.libertysecurity.org) and the Observatory accessible on it comprise a total number of 2,114 documents, which include mainly academic texts, data, bibliographies, information about the numerous activities conducted under the project's umbrella, as well as a selection of

official documents, NGO's documents, newspaper articles and announcements related to the themes of CHALLENGE.

Operation and usage of the infrastructure

The CHALLENGE website is at present very well known.. Since the beginning of 2008, there have been more 5,000 visits per day with more than 7,500 for example in May 2008. The visibility of the Observatory and the dissemination of the documents comprising the website are further supported by the CHALLENGE newsletter which is currently sent to more than 1,500 subscribers.

Also in the fourth year of the project a strategic dissemination plan was developed²¹, including links with other projects, enhancing policy relevance and impact through public debate, and expanding the conceptual framework of the project as set out in its mid-term report. A good example of a major development is the informal Network of National Civil Servants allowing for interaction between the project participants and a group of active national civil servants working on issues related to the project's objectives. The following elements of this might be highlighted. First, all the Work Packages have involved directly or indirectly the national civil servants in their activities. Second, some members of the informal network have also involved CHALLENGE researchers in their events. Third, the informal network has been continuously updated about the project activities and developments. Fourth, some members of the network of civil servants have actively participated in CHALLENGE events and training sessions as speakers, discussants or general public. Fifth, there have been cases where they have been offered the possibility to participate in publications linked to the project. Finally, a workshop was envisaged to take place during the last phase of the project in order to allow for their involvement in the debate leading to the policy formulation.

Project outcomes

CHALLENGE has brought tangible benefits in key areas. For example:

- the development of a significant institution, the Observatory,
- enabling the development of an innovative interdisciplinary network of scholars.
- generating a broad array of research resources (databases, website, expertise, observatory, reports, books, classified bibliography, workshops, etc).
- enhancing an emerging cross-cultural and cross-national conversation about fundamental questions concerning the way issues of security and liberty are being addressed in civil society.

In terms of outputs CHALLENGE has generating a substantial number of publications addressing the changing dynamics and relationship between liberty and security from a range of interdisciplinary perspectives. The website has benefited from a high posting of documents which have included academic texts, bibliographies, selected official and NGOs documents, news items and similar.

The training dimension has also been a very relevant element of the project. The CHALLENGE training schools have allowed for the setting up a network of Ph.D students and experts/academics that are not formally part of the project. Progressive expansion of this element has resulted in coverage of the areas of immigration, asylum, integration, social inclusion/protection and religion. The training school also provides a unique platform for establishing a dialogue and facilitating the use of the project's results for training purposes.

²¹ CHALLENGE, 4th Annual Activity Report, p. 13

The Future

CHALLENGE is now finished and there are no specific plans for continuance of the project in its present form. However the strong working relationships formed will no doubt continue in a variety of ways in coming years and it seems some opportunity for bridging CHALLENGE with COST Action ISO 807 – LiSS (Living in Surveillance Societies) might be identified.

Conclusions

- CHALLENGE brought together a network of scholars from a wide range of professional backgrounds to work together on significant problems in the field of liberty and security. It also created an Observatory of activities and analyses in the field that constitutes a policy-relevant database. CHALLENGE was not designated as a “research infrastructures” project but nevertheless generated an infrastructural platform providing a broad array of research resources including tools, methodologies, workshop and meeting reports and bibliographic data. In this way it has created potentially important tools for further research.
- The wealth of information developed and recorded in CHALLENGE particularly as a result of cooperative work involving professional researchers from widely different disciplines has resulted in a significant contribution to European comparative research in the field. This comes about in several ways for example through use of described tools and methodologies and as a result of the training put in place. .

ECHO

Project origination and overall outline

The original 18-month initial phase of the ECHO project was intended as a feasibility study. ECHO was the first major co-operative project funded by the European Commission to bridge the gap between the humanities and new information technologies. The basic idea was to establish an open-source culture of the public and scholarly exploitation of cultural heritage on the internet, thus contributing to the emergence of a Web of Culture and Science. The aim was to create an “Agora,” a community of producers and users of culturally relevant information, who were willing to freely exchange such information in order to build a common pan-European infrastructure of scientific knowledge and cultural heritage content.

So the aims of the initial 18 month ECHO project were formulated under the assumption that this project was only the pilot phase of a broader initiative to institutionalize permanent support on a national as well European level to make common European cultural heritage openly accessible through the Internet and to secure the long-term preservation of cultural content.

Implementation approach

ECHO is a collaborative research endeavour that provides active support for scientific and cultural institutions and projects in Europe that hold or enrich cultural heritage through new technologies and media. The ECHO Charter aims at defining the criteria for adequate exploitation of the new media's potential for archival preservation, scholarly and educational exploration, as well as public distribution of the shared cultural heritage.

A key basis for taking part and also being supported by the ECHO initiative was agreement with an open access policy. ECHO defined this in the ECHO Charter and it was also presented through the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in Sciences and Humanities.

The thrust of the ECHO initiative was the creation of an open access infrastructure suitable to launch a self-sustaining dynamic process that ensures a substantial flow of cultural content

into the new media – in particular through the internet .Without a concerted effort, the numerous innovative projects launched locally in many European countries, and even projects launched within the framework of the European community, would have very little chance of surviving and keeping up with the rapid technological processes occurring.

Nature of the infrastructure created

ECHO aimed to develop an open-access infrastructure for making resources publicly available online in a way that guaranteed the interoperability with other contents and tools, thus creating an added value for every user. The resulting infrastructure would allow every scientific institution, archive, library, museum, or educational institution to make their resources available online with little effort and in a way that guarantees their interoperability with other representations of human knowledge. In order to make participation in the Agora attractive, every potential contributor should gain an extra value when entering by making contents or tools available to all on the Web.

Research institutes, universities, libraries, museums, and archives, who share the vision of ECHO were invited to join the initiative and to bring in cultural heritage, research source material and scholarly metadata related to the material. The network of these ECHO “knowledge weavers” consisted of more than 120 scientific and cultural institutions worldwide that contributed cultural heritage content as well as scholarly metadata.

Operation and usage of the infrastructure

The ECHO initiative is open for provision of content in numerous fields and scientific disciplines. It started by presenting seed collections exemplifying the operation of the initiative. The various presentations of these seed collections demonstrated the idea of making other collections accessible via the ECHO portal.

In view of the short span of the first phase of the project and the need to establish a visible and convincing paradigm, a pragmatic plan-of-action was developed and realized. It focused on exploiting the potential of the existing web technology, standardizing existing tools, setting up a stable infrastructure, creating preconditions for work distributed throughout the web, acquiring substantial content, and creating a growing network of partners as a premise for the envisaged follow- up project.

The long-term vision of ECHO was that of an electronic representation of the European cultural heritage on the web which would make it more widely available than ever before in its history and thus strengthen its function as a bond of the European community. The important fact was, however, not the success of ECHO as a specific project, but the survival and long-term achievement of an open-source collection for cultural heritage on the Web.

Project outcomes

A substantial part of the work in the pilot phase of the ECHO project was devoted to the integration of existing tools developed and used by the partner institutions in creating an open access platform and a web server dedicated to making scientific knowledge and cultural content accessible to web clients using standard browser environments.

As a rule, the relevant data have been provided by producers of knowledge systems or by holders of cultural content in a variety of mutually incompatible or even proprietary formats. Since, therefore, automatic conversion into standard formats was always only possible in a dilatory and piecemeal way, the incipient open access platform realized in the initial pilot ECHO project tried to solve such problems by keeping the standards for the integration of data as low as possible. This strategy had immediate consequences. In spite of the incompatibility of most of the input data formats, an enormous number of sources could already be incorporated into the incipient open access platform of the current ECHO project during the short funding period of the pilot project.

In summary, tools that were part of specialized and sophisticated technologies developed by the ECHO partners or by institutions with which they cooperate, were generalized, thus becoming building blocks of an incipient open access platform for digitized scientific knowledge and cultural contents. This strategy has led to a rapidly growing community of members of the Agora. The immediate results of the relatively short period of the pilot ECHO project have made apparent that the services currently offered realize only a small fraction of the inherent potential.. Due to the time and budget restrictions of the pilot phase, the services currently offered by the incipient open access platform of the ECHO project were limited to basic applications of language technology and multimedia data processing.

The success in making substantial amounts of cultural heritage available on the Web, together with the adoption of the ECHO Charter as the definition of an open access policy for culture, had repercussions well beyond the community of the immediate ECHO partners and associates. This success was also perceived as a significant contribution to the open access discussion, complementing the dominant focus on scientific knowledge, with a new emphasis on cultural heritage; an issue hitherto in the shade of the open access debate. As a consequence, for the first time the humanities were able to join forces with the natural sciences in an effort to create a common infrastructure for the representation of culture and science on the Internet.

The most significant innovative achievements resulting from the 18 months pilot phase of the ECHO project can be summarized in three major points:

- The ECHO project established an incipient open access platform for scientific knowledge and cultural contents as a basis for distributed work in a growing Agora network, a European infrastructure for representing shared, extensible resources. The scope and design of this network formed a stable structure in itself and, at the same time, the basis for a follow-up project.
- The ECHO project implemented the platform on a website with extendable models of content representation and a substantial amount of cultural content which is continuously enriched by a self-sustaining process. In addition to a wealth of cultural information in various fields of knowledge demonstrated in seed collections, a number of innovative interactive services including language technology or multimedia data processing have been made available.
- The ECHO project created on a national and international level awareness among holders of cultural heritage, scientists, educators, and policy makers of the necessity to extend the open access movement from the natural sciences to the domain of the humanities and cultural heritage, and to create adequate national support structures.

Interface with large infrastructures

ECHO is linked to DARIAH²² (Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities), a selected ESFRI roadmap project as a result of recommendations from the European Cultural Heritage Working Group (ECH EG). However at the present time this linkage is not viewed as particularly satisfactory. It is notable that as compared to the data available through the ECHO website the DARIAH output is predominantly concerned with published articles, workshops, lectures, news items etc rather than provided facilities for researching archived artefacts directly. The preparatory work is described as delivering “a consistent architecture and implementation plan to show that a pan-European research infrastructure for the arts and humanities is feasible”. On the basis of present information therefore confidence in linkage to DARIAH as an interface for ECHO is not of a high order.

²² ECHO is part of WP7 of DARIAH – Activity 4

The Future

The future of culture on the Web essentially depends on whether or not conditions can be created that allow for a creative co-development of content, technology, and infrastructure as demonstrated in an exemplary way by the pilot phase of the ECHO project.

What is urgently needed are funds specifically allocated to the integration of research in the humanities and content-driven technology development. It would then be feasible to support new forms of making cultural heritage openly available online, addressing, at the same time, the needs of scholarly research and of public education, thus exploiting the pre-dominating role of the Web for turning the information society ever more towards a society of culture and knowledge.

At present ECHO depends on continuing support from the Max Planck coordinating institute's resources as the FP5 funding was limited to an 18 month pilot study to establish the validity of the ECHO concept.

ECHO is an impressive project with a fascinating website on which many varied forms of cultural artefacts from Europe and more widely have been archived in common digital forms that allow for further research and comparability studies. The ECHO website convincingly demonstrates what has been achieved. The future however is uncertain. It is very dependent on one coordinating institution for continuing support and in many ways this is being achieved on a part-time basis using out-of-hours efforts by enthusiastic and dedicated individuals from the various institutions involved.

However without the promise of dedicated resourcing for the valuable infrastructure created there must be a question about how effectively various institutions will agree to make their collected material available for this form of Web-based archive. The present situation is a great pity and very unsatisfactory for European researchers as it is likely to be yet another example of a lost opportunity in Europe. A significant initiative has been developed and supported which shows fascinating potential yet it has been left in a kind of void so is now simply dependent on the goodwill of those who are still enthusiastically involved. The future of ECHO therefore remains in considerable doubt.

Conclusions

- ECHO is a FP5 "research infrastructures" project and despite receiving only short term funding as a "pilot project" has provided a valuable and rich infrastructure of archived cultural artefacts on a Web-based facility that is available to all. Indeed great care was taken to establish an open access formal positioning for the project and that remains the case.
- The ECHO infrastructure provides the facility for developing comparative research both in terms of investigating the historical factors leading to the creation of the artefacts themselves and through methodologies described that allow comparisons to be made on the skills and materials made use of at a given period of history.

ESS

Project origination and overall outline

The European Social Survey was initiated and seed-funded by the European Science Foundation (ESF). Prompting their decision was the realization that most cross-national attitude surveys in Europe at that time were not of sufficient rigour to draw on as reliable sources of knowledge about value change in Europe.

The ESS is funded jointly by the European Commission, the ESF and scientific funding bodies in each participating country. To take part, countries must find the funding to cover the costs of fieldwork and co-ordination of the survey at the national level. Initial funding from the European Commission for Round 1 of the ESS was conditional on at least nine self-funding countries participating. In the event, an overwhelming 22 countries did so, 26 taking part in Round 2, 25 in Round 3 and 31 in Round 4.

The objective of the ESS is to design, develop and run a conceptually well-anchored and methodologically bullet-proof study of changing social attitudes and values. Achieving these aims in a cross-national context requires 'optimal comparability' in operating the study within all participating countries. So the objective of the ESS sampling strategy is the "design and implementation of workable and equivalent sampling strategies in all participating countries".

Implementation approach

The central aim of the ESS is to gather data about changing values, attitudes, attributes and behaviour patterns within European polities. Academically driven but designed to feed into key European policy debates, the ESS hopes to measure and explain how people's social values, cultural norms and behaviour patterns are distributed, the way in which they differ within and between nations, and the direction and speed at which they are changing. Comparative research results are achieved in areas such as ageing and financial security; a digital divide relating to internet access; trust in politicians; education and political involvement; families and work; religiosity and secularism; public responses to migration; sex and sexuality; skills training and education amongst others.

Data collection takes place every two years, by means of face to face interviews followed by a short supplement. The questionnaire consists of a 'core' module lasting about half an hour - which remains relatively constant from Round to Round - plus two 'rotating' modules, to be repeated at intervals, each devoted to a substantive topic or theme.

Nature of the infrastructure created

Drawing on the best examples at national and international level, the ESS has already produced a rich, publicly available dataset. The format in which it is available makes it easily accessible not only to the social science and policy communities in Europe and beyond, but also to the mass media and other interested users via the World Wide Web. The dataset is freely available without charge to any interested user. The ESS has been designed as a regular biennial study that will measure change over time.

ESS aims to be highly innovative. In numerous respects – such as its sampling standards, questionnaire design, measurement methods, translation protocols, event monitoring, response enhancement, fieldwork management, data deposit and dissemination and has broken fresh ground and proved influential.

Drawing on the best traditions of quantitative social measurement, and combining them with a range of pioneering new methods, a rich, publicly available dataset is now in place and being widely used. Thus for the first time in Europe, an academic cross-national attitude study is put in place according to identical and uniquely ambitious ground-rules that had been laid down in advance in a centrally-determined specification.

Operation and usage of the infrastructure

One of the most distinctive features of the ESS is that individual countries participate according to a clear and detailed central specification of requirements. In addition periodic guidance documents are produced to assist national co-ordinators during the planning and implementation stages of the survey.

Two trademarks of the ESS are the rigour of its documentation and the accessibility of its data. Both are made possible by the ESS [data archive](#) maintained by the team at Norwegian Social

Science Data Services (NSD). To access data files, interested parties have to [register as a ESS data user](#) and there are currently over 26,100 registered users of the data website from across the world. Regular news bulletins (formerly known as the newsletter) are circulated by email. These can be [downloaded](#) for access by a wider audience.

Project outcomes

From the beginning ESS began to provide rigorous measures of changing cross-national attitudes and values of a kind that have hitherto been very scarce, whether in Europe or anywhere else. It also pioneered and 'proved' a standard of methodology for cross-national attitude measurement that had hitherto not been considered achievable. The project's sampling standards, questionnaire design tools, translation protocols, event monitoring techniques, response enhancement mechanisms, fieldwork management tools and data dissemination arrangements have all broken fresh ground and influenced standards at both a national and international level. The high demand for the ESS data set throughout Europe from the very moment it became available is testimony to its perceived value and utility among the academic and policy communities.

Two day training courses are also provided and are heavily subscribed. The specific aim is to equip researchers with the skills and knowledge they need to improve the rigour and equivalence of cross-national survey research in the European context. The courses also provide researchers new to comparative research with a unique opportunity to meet others also entering the field and to interact with acknowledged experts in cross-national survey design and implementation.

ESS EduNet is a new Internet-based analysis-training programme based on data from the ESS, aimed primarily at students in Higher Education. It provides hands-on examples and exercises.

The ESS presents an outstanding opportunity to investigate important methodological issues concerning survey data quality in a cross-national context. A programme of methodological research has been built into the project, in order to investigate major issues in surveys such as non-response, the reliability and validity of questions and the feasibility of mixing modes of data collection.

Interface with large infrastructures

In 2006, the ESS was identified by the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) as one of 35 potential European Research Infrastructures (and, in particular, one of 5 identified social sciences and humanities research infrastructures). In 2007, the ESS was awarded funding under the Research Infrastructures Priority, Capacities Specific Programme of FP7 to commence preparatory actions in anticipation for its possible selection as a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC).

The Future

When ESS was starting its fourth biennial Round, it could be seen as a pioneering example of the principles and practices behind the European Research Area, with funding from both the EC and over 20 national Research Councils. It therefore sought to consolidate the achievements to date and prepare the project for its transition into an upgraded and sustainable Infrastructure. Although always envisaged as a time series, the future of the ESS had remained uncertain owing to a lack of sustained funding. Its diverse *ad hoc* funding arrangements that have sufficed so far were in need of transformation, alongside a review of its governance arrangements. The upgrade sought was to secure continuity and expansion of the ESS as a lasting infrastructure that continues to contribute substantively and methodologically to European scientific practice and good governance.

As indicated above this aspiration may now be coming to fruition. In 2007, the ESS was

awarded funding under the Research Infrastructures Priority, Capacities Specific Programme, Framework Programme 7, to commence preparatory actions in anticipation of its possible selection as a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) in 2013. This preparatory action (European Social Survey Infrastructure Preparatory Phase Project) brings together key stakeholders from the scientific community and representatives of national research ministries and research councils and the ESF. Their joint activities include: developing a viable governance structure which will hold for the long-term operation of the ESS ERIC; developing its legal underpinnings and clarifying and securing agreement for the financial model which will support the ERIC activities.

Conclusions

- ESS has been widely recognised for contributing to the development of comparative research in Europe through the methodologies developed and used, the training provided and the infrastructure created.
- ESS has been supported under FP5 and FP6 as a “research infrastructures” project(s) and as such it has provided an invaluable infrastructure for researchers outside the project consortia. Its financial support has been widely based in Europe and this can be recognised as confirming one of its strengths. Its adoption in the ESFRI roadmap also confirms the valuable nature of the infrastructure it provides for European researchers.

Key points

- Comparative research is a strong feature not least because many of the areas addressed transcend national boundaries (All Case Studies)
- European research collaboration or cooperation is very evident (All Case Studies)
- Some projects have their origination in earlier funded projects (EUROCCUPATIONS; CHALLENGE);
- Accessible infrastructures were created but these could be in different forms (All Case Studies);
- Creating an infrastructure in the form of a database was an objective for some (EUROCCUPATIONS);
- Accessible archived data can be the base for research pursued by others (ESS; EUROCCUPATIONS);
- Infrastructures created can be in the form of platforms of collaborative activity or portals of entry to an area in which leading players are cooperating (CHALLENGE; IMISCOE);
- Infrastructures derived from the thematic programme might be a means of achieving an objective rather than an end in itself – though there are exceptions (IMISCOE; CHALLENGE);
- Large infrastructures of an archival nature can originate in the thematic programme area but develop to acquire an ESFRI positioning (ESS; ECHO);
- SSH infrastructures in particular show strong policy relevance but policy take-up may be problematic (IMISCOE; CHALLENGE);
- What happens to a created infrastructure in the future can take different forms (All Case Studies);
- Instruments were chosen to good effect (All Case Studies).

Lessons

A high proportion of FP6 SSH thematic projects led to the generation of datasets and/or infrastructures as expressed in the project objectives or particular work packages. Of the 42 FP6 projects examined, 34 generated datasets or infrastructures as identified by the project information provided. The 9 FP5 projects identified were anyway designated as infrastructure projects. Assessment of the benefits and usefulness of the identified projects then created a further short list prior to discussion with DG RTD to select the five Case Study projects.

The European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) supports a coherent and strategy-led approach to policy-making on Research Infrastructures (RIs) in Europe and facilitates multilateral initiatives leading to the better use and development of RIs.²³ The ESFRI Social Sciences and Humanities Roadmap Working Group was composed of 21 Members representing a range of organisations engaged in Social Sciences and Humanities. In the selected case studies, ESS is part of the roadmap and ECHO has some links to ESFRI via the DARIAH project so both thematically- derived infrastructures and more institutionally-derived infrastructures are represented in the case studies. Therefore this covers another important policy determinant in that there are close relationships between SSH and relevant parts of the Research Infrastructures programme where ESFRI is the key influence.

Overall findings from the Case Studies include the following:

- **Pan European research found to be contributing to the ERA:**

The cross-European research involvements are impressive during a project's life and give confidence about the contribution made in furthering the ERA.

- **Concerns over project sustainability:**

An important research resource has often been created but the question of its sustainability in the future is still an open one. For example, in the case of EUROCCUPATIONS, while such an initiative might be hosted by another organisation, there are still concerns over its maintenance, ensuring that it is kept up to date and some concerns relating to quality control. In the case of IMISCOE the partner organisations have made a commitment to continue but funding set aside for this purpose may well be too modest to maintain an adequate level of activity. CHALLENGE has finished but professional relationships are likely to continue and there may be links forged with COST Action ISO 807 – LiSS (Living in Surveillance Societies). For ESS and ECHO an ESFRI positioning may facilitate or guarantee future development though this is far from clear for the ECHO project which presently relies on institute goodwill for its continuing existence.

- **Variety in project outputs:**

The outputs of projects show different characteristics. In EUROCCUPATIONS, the objective was to create a **database** of vital information on occupations. It constitutes a valuable tool that can contribute to further comparative research in Europe. In IMISCOE a **portal** has been created to a large portfolio of research and informational resources in terms of qualitative and quantitative findings, published outputs of various types, records of meetings and workshops, news commentary that network members and others can use to provide them with a state of the art positioning and identify a contribution. Bottom up research ideas have come about as a result of the networking created, so, arguably, the project could be considered as an **incubator of research**. Teaching and communications are also strengths in addition to innovative pan-

²³ Cited several times as a mission statement for ESFRI – e.g. original report of the Expert Group set up by the Council; on Cordis: http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/index_en.cfm?pg=esfri-background.

European comparative research, though links to policy-making have proved more difficult. CHALLENGE has similarly created a platform of a **network of scholars** from multi-disciplinary and cross-European backgrounds who have applied their minds to difficult social issues facing Europe in ways that would not have occurred without the IP approach. New research approaches have been generated as a result. There is a prolific number of **published outputs** available on the website. There has also been successful involvement of many different stakeholders in **policy-making and regulatory execution** as well as in the research itself.

- **Examples of instruments leading to effective collaboration:**

The instruments used in each of the case studies where interviews have been held appear to have been chosen to good effect. In EUROCCUPATIONS several senior researchers from organisations largely known to each other wished to work together to fulfil a particular research objective, so a STREP was a good vehicle for their purpose of joining together to work on the required research project. In IMISCOE the aim was to network excellent research partners in work packages that would otherwise not have involved them and so new projects have been generated by this NoE. In CHALLENGE particular research organisations/individuals pursuing their own research objectives were integrated in order to address societal issues of key pan-European concern, so an IP was an appropriate vehicle for achieving this.

- **Funding for pan-European projects is unlikely to come from elsewhere:**

Much of the pan-European research intrinsic to the projects including:

- the contribution to ERA (by generating new and wider research ideas and methodologies),
- the contribution to research excellence at a European level,
- the training opportunities provided
- the value of comparative research in opening up new avenues

would not likely be funded at national Member State level alone due to the fact that social issues usually relate to strongly national concerns. FP funding is a vital component for achieving or at least catalysing such types of outcome as all projects demonstrated well.

- **Sustainable infrastructures not required to have pre-defined characteristics:**

Looking at the case studies where interviews have occurred, it might be argued that the type of sustainable infrastructure contributing real pan-European value for comparative research and links to policy-making should not be required to have particular pre-defined characteristics. Rather the diversity of what is being created should be valued. An infrastructure that makes a genuine contribution to ERA and involves many scientists from different MS in different ways, including the value of undertaking comparative research, can take several different forms. It need not be viewed as necessarily providing an archive or dataset although there are excellent examples of that. Rather, portals of entry to an area of pan-European research, platforms of activity to which a contribution can be made or networks of scholars applying their brainpower together across pan-European problems are all worthy infrastructures that have the potential to contribute in a fundamental way to knowledge generation both across Europe and even more widely.

- **Types of Infrastructures produced – a commentary**

1 Foundational infrastructures

Traditionally, infrastructures in SSH might be thought of as large archival databanks (see the work of EROHS and ESFRI Roadmap). Such archival capability might be seen as **foundational infrastructures** - something to which one can go and then undertake research (compare CERN or EMBO). It is logical that thematic projects developing such infrastructures should move over time from a thematic programme dimension to a Research Infrastructures programme dimension, but how to define this transitional boundary and when it should be crossed is a key question. Some foundational infrastructures are created directly by the project generating significant quantities of data to form a dataset, e.g. ESS. Other infrastructures depend on generating an archival web-based bedrock on which others can work as a result of various institutions deciding to deposit their archivable material in them because the electronic basis of the foundational infrastructure being created makes access easy for all and facilitates comparative work. An example here is ECHO.

2 Facilitational infrastructures

The SSH thematic programme includes many projects that generated datasets (sometimes referred to as infrastructures) as part of the project's implementation. Many of these are **facilitational infrastructures** - comprising data that is required only in order to fulfil the project objectives and not as ends in themselves. However, some of the datasets produced for this purpose may become, foundational if they demonstrate a potential for use by other researchers. Then the thematic project has created an infrastructure that in future should be seen to have a continuing requirement for support. EUROCCUPATIONS is a project of this sort and it may have solved its future position by incorporation into the Wage Indicator Foundation in order to grow into a foundational infrastructure containing data upon which others can undertake research.

3 Portals and platforms

Other thematic projects, while indicating the provision of an infrastructure in available documentation, are not foundational or archival in the same way as those whose characteristics clearly foresaw creation of a dataset as their objective. Neither are they facilitational in terms of generating datasets in order to achieve the project objectives. However such projects could be regarded as creating facilitational infrastructures of a different nature. For example a **portal of entry** may be created into the activities of a research area in which the key players are involved and have cooperated to generate or incubate ideas for new research activities. What has been created here is not necessarily inanimate data content but a people-based activity or set of activities - a portal through which others can come to make their contribution to generating new research projects. IMISCOE is such an example and the NoE concept fulfils well what it has achieved and might continue to achieve. There is no dataset entity that needs maintenance - just a facilitation of contact between the professional people involved.

A similar situation might result from the collaborative research seen in an IR where substantial players from diverse disciplines have come together to work on common problems that were jointly agreed in areas of policy concern. Again, no archive or foundational concept exists, but the players involved are the key to what has been achieved rather than data on its own. CHALLENGE is such a project. It may not go forward into the future as such a **platform of collaboration**, but elements of it may remain not least through linkage to other projects.

4 Defining the types and transitions

What is needed in this situation is a better specification of the types of infrastructure

that can be created, their usage and future support. Some understanding is necessary of the transition from thematic facilitational infrastructures into foundational research infrastructures that in the FP might gain support from horizontal funding areas rather than vertical thematic sources. Such an approach can only support the further development of ERA. ESS may well be the prototype example of what can be done here. There are various aspects in which the infrastructures created in this way can influence how they are to be viewed in terms of seeking future and more continuing support - for example:

- How important are they for policy-making?
- How strong is the educational or training element?
- What is the potential for further research being undertaken on the dataset that has been created?
- What degree of enhancement of comparative research is achievable?

THE CAREERS OF RESEARCHERS AND HOW THEY MAY BE AFFECTED BY PARTICIPATION IN DIFFERENT PROJECT TYPES

Introduction

This section focuses on the impact of the Framework Programme in the social sciences and humanities on the careers of researchers including career outcomes and experiences.

The study has focused on career impact at all levels broadly categorised as early, mid and senior career level.

Methods

The main research instruments designed to throw light on this critical dimension of impact included the on-line survey of researchers, the focus groups with researchers and the individual interviews with researchers. This report draws directly on the findings of these three sources of data (which were submitted in earlier reports for this evaluation). On occasion reference is also made to interviews with policymakers, which were carried out as part of the same project. A summary report containing the main findings is also available. The purpose of using these instruments to gather data is that it enables quantitative data based on the survey to be combined with more detailed information from focus groups and individual interviews. Therefore throughout the report, data from these sources are used in conjunction with each other. The survey results provide some quantitative data, based on fairly general questions about research careers, and richer data from focus groups and interviews is used to provide detailed explanations of some of the types of responses to the questionnaire. Careful attention has been paid to safeguarding confidentiality and anonymity of respondents. This has required us to anonymise the name of the project and any institutions involved. The three research instruments are now described.

The Individual Interviews with Researchers

This component of the study was planned to include 25 interviews with researchers in five of the participating countries including: the UK, Germany, Slovenia, Poland and Switzerland. The sample was drawn from a list of FP6 projects provided by the Commission. Careful attention was given to try to maintain a balance in the selection of the sample of people at different stages in their career (early, mid- and senior). A list of interviewees with country of location, level (early, mid- and senior) and their role in the project has been delivered as part of earlier reports for this evaluation. Different versions of the discussion guide were developed, which enabled us to ask slightly different questions to senior, mid-career and junior researchers. The questions related to the role and experience of the researchers in the project, and the impact it had on the careers of researchers at these different levels. They related to impacts in a number of areas, such as: training, development of networks, outputs and future career development. The first cohort of interviews (all in the UK) was conducted face-to-face as this gave us a deeper understanding and enabled us to test the interview questions. The remainder were conducted by telephone. They were fully transcribed and coded in a software programme for qualitative analysis (N8). 22 interviews took place.

The Focus Groups

Focus Groups were organised in three countries (Poland, Norway and Germany). For each of the three countries sampled to take part in the mini-discussion groups, one group was held with senior researchers and one with junior researchers. In total, 28 researchers took part.

On-Line Survey

An on-line survey was also administered in the course of the study which included questions about research career. Responses were obtained from 461 researchers. Since only details of

project coordinators or PIs were available, it was only possible to contact senior researchers for this part of the research (Contact details of researchers employed on the projects were obtained at a later date from projects coordinators).

Understanding and Assessing Career Impact

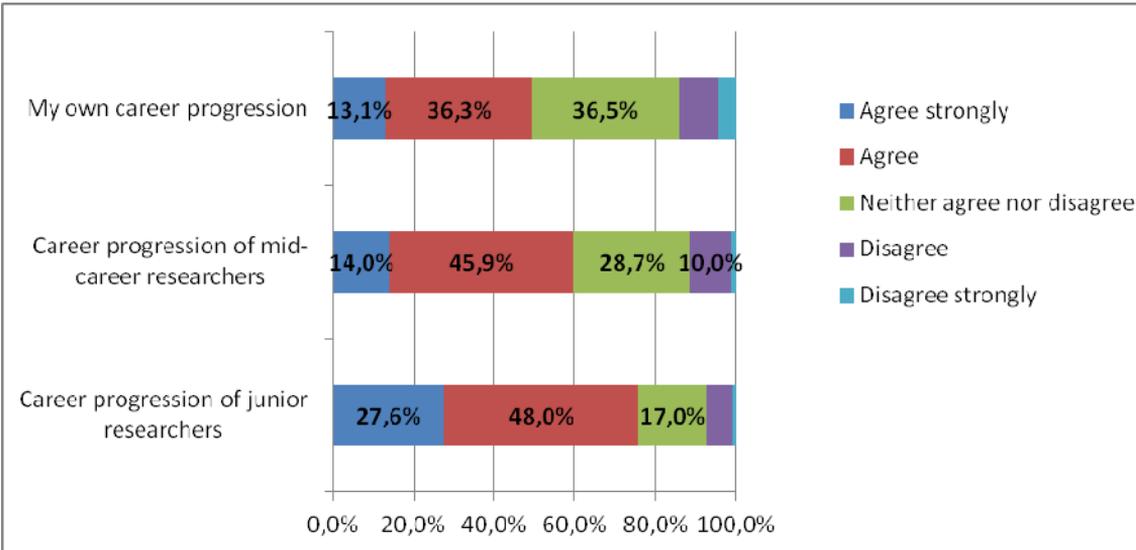
The concept of career is complex and research careers are highly diverse. Rather than assessing in a simplistic sense whether individuals had ‘progressed’ as a result of their engagement with the FP programmes, the study sought to understand different dimensions of impact and how these together shaped the quality and direction of research careers. The Introduction provides a summary of the level of impact on researchers at different levels based on the survey and results from the focus groups and individual interviews are used to start to shed more light on the extent of impact. More detailed analysis of respondents’ comments on a range of issues supports a more holistic and detailed understanding of the constituent elements of career progression and research effectiveness. The study has endeavoured to determine whether the kinds of mobility individuals had engaged in and the types of networks and connections they had formed supported (and are likely to continue to support). The remainder of the report thus discusses the extent and type of impact based on the results of the survey, the individual interviews and the focus groups.

Career Impact and Seniority

Respondents to the on-line survey included project co-ordinators and national partners. The majority of these people (85%) fell within the ‘senior’ career category, with some at higher levels of the mid-career group (12.7%). According to the experiences of this cohort of FP participants, involvement in the Framework programmes has had a positive impact on the career progression of both early and mid career researchers. The majority of respondents (75.5%) thought that the FP funded project ‘supported the career progression of junior researchers’, and almost 60% of respondents stated that the project supported the career progression of mid-career researchers.

Almost 50% of respondents confirmed that it also supported their own career progression although over a third of them (36.5%) were undecided (Figure 30):

Figure 44: Enhancement of Research Careers within the Consortia



Source: On-Line Survey of Coordinators and Partners

It is not surprising that many of the senior researchers involved in coordinating these projects

were less likely to identify an immediate impact on their own career progression, since many were already well established. 86.6% of respondents had been engaged in collaborative projects in the past, and thus their involvement with a collaborative project was not a new experience. To that extent, the project is unlikely to launch or transform their career. The coordinators and partners who responded to the survey identified a more important impact on the careers of junior researchers and to a lesser degree mid-career researchers. This was confirmed by interviews with junior researchers, as discussed below, and in more detailed throughout the report. It is not surprising that participation in a FP project would impact more on those previously not involved in collaborative projects. Although many reported an impact in terms of 'improving their prospects for career progression', only a third felt that it would enhance their progression within their current employing institution. The focus groups with senior researchers echoed and provided explanations for these findings. In the main the impact on their career was not huge because they were already at an advanced stage in their career. The senior German researchers made the following comments:

I was already in an advanced state of my career when I became involved so it didn't have an impact, but it has extended very much my international connectiveness (DFGS).

In fact, the participants in the final examples express concern that their involvement (as coordinators) has actually distracted them from scholarly activity:

I agree with you about this actually [but] in my case [it's] been a kind of burden. I have to go to those meetings and because so many people come from different countries, different [backgrounds] we spend so much time on discussion and there is very little scholarly benefit from those meetings (NFGS).

Although these comments by senior researchers in the course of the focus groups indicate a lack of significant overall impact on terms of their personal career progression, more detailed analysis of specific dimensions of their research activity identified more significant impact. Their involvement in the programme provided opportunities in terms of extending networks and new publication opportunities. These types of opportunities were even more important for junior researchers. Whereas they may have helped more senior academics extend networks and achieve publications, in the case of junior researchers, in many cases they launched their careers in terms of networking, publications and other areas. The range of impacts is discussed by the following Polish junior researcher in one of the focus groups:

So definitely this has a big impact. It defines probably my future career and research field. I might say quite a lot about the impact on my career, about not only scientific area but also the contacts I got since I got involved in this project, this international experience, the experience of working with people from different countries and definitely very important issues; the possibility of publishing papers in national magazines, co-operation with people from different countries on the same papers, working with the people who share the same interests. From the scientific point of view publications are quite an important issue .. once you are involved in such projects you have a chance to work with people from different countries who probably have better access to good publishers. So this is very important to ... have your name in very well known journals. This is definitely an opportunity. .. and you have a chance to exchange ideas with colleagues who have more experience .. you knew the names from publications and now you have a chance to interact with these people. Then you have also the chance to search for projects, ... to go abroad to participate in working meetings related to the project but also as the dissemination of the knowledge which you get from the project you go for the conferences. In [the] budget there are certain amounts of money directed to the young researchers who can go to the conferences just to disseminate knowledge (PFGE).

As can be seen from the survey results and as will become clear throughout the Report, the more important impacts are on early career researchers. The impacts tend to become less important the higher the career level of the researcher. This may be because many opportunities offered by the FP programmes were already open to them. They have established their own networks with close colleagues with similar research interests, and already have opportunities to travel and network, and they have established publications opportunities. Thus opportunities offered by the FP programmes are more likely to be compared with alternatives, and additionality is more of an issue. On the other hand, junior researchers may, as a result of their participation in the FP project, have privileged access to international networks, including well established academics, which also afford excellent training and publication opportunities, which are not available to the majority of researchers of their status. Project coordinators are more likely to see the onerous demands of coordinating the project, producing deliverables and extensive travel requirements as a burden, which may conflict with their responsibilities at their home institutions. Researchers at all levels report the development of international networks and publications opportunities. The more senior researchers expressed more ambivalence about the quality of opportunity. In some cases, mid and senior researchers prefer to rely on smaller, tighter networks of researchers rather than the large diverse networks associated with FP projects. The Integrated Projects may produce co-authored publications, which is a useful route in for junior researchers, but may be less prestigious or regarded as less high quality for senior researchers. Mid-career researchers may also be affected more by family demands which restrict their ability to travel and network. These arguments will be developed in greater depth, and are summarised under the following Sections:

- Internationalisation and Mobility
- The Characteristics and Role of Networks in the FP Projects
- Research Outcomes
- Skills and Training
- Policy Impact

Internationalisation and Mobility

Introduction

In March 2005, the European Commission adopted the 'European Charter for Researchers' and the 'Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers' (the Charter and Code). The Charter and Code emphasises the importance of mobility to research careers:

*Employers and/or funders must recognise the value of geographical, inter-sectoral, inter- and trans-disciplinary and virtual mobility as well as mobility between the public and private sector as an important means of enhancing scientific knowledge and professional development at any stage of a researcher's career... they should fully value and acknowledge **any** mobility experience within their career progression/appraisal system.*

The second chapter of this section focuses on geographical mobility (movement between Member States). Recent research on scientific mobility (Ackers et al, 2009: Ackers and Gill, 2008: Cox, 2008: King 2002: Jons, 2008) emphasises the importance of taking a broad approach which goes beyond traditional conceptions (ie working and residing in another country for a set period of time and usually more than a year) to capture the complex forms of movement that support more international approaches to research and career progression.

Responses to the on-line survey suggest a high level of impact on geographical mobility. Nearly 76% agreed that the programme 'generated new opportunities for international mobility' and

65.6% agreed that it increased their own mobility. As will be discussed below, this often took the form of short visits to attend project meetings, conference, training events and generally to extend networks. Longer stays abroad were less common.

Summary Findings

New Mobility Opportunities

The Framework Programme (FP) has had a major impact on international mobility. The majority of respondents believed that it has both generated new opportunities for mobility in general and increased their own mobility.

Limited Long Stay Mobility

Relatively few of the respondents had experienced long-stay mobility as a direct result of the FP; the majority were working in their 'home' country. This was the case at all levels of seniority: only 2 early career researchers (ECRs) had moved to another country to take up employment as a result of the FP.

A Growth in Mobility Capital

There was a sense that the involvement of especially early career researchers in the scheme had generated a degree of 'mobility capital' increasing the appetite and propensity for future moves.

Global Labour Markets for Researchers

Respondents also recognised the global nature of academic labour markets and were made even more aware of 'international opportunity structures':

*[The Scheme] opens new opportunities if not for us senior researchers at least for the younger because they have all kinds of problems within the country and by this **international opportunity structure** they can get an additional possibility to move somewhere. (RC16)*

This was viewed as a positive factor in some respects, enabling ECR to pursue their research interests unconstrained by national boundaries. However, there was also a concern that this 'opportunity structure' was more of a 'necessity structure' with ECR having little choice but to seek positions abroad given the growth in fixed term contracts.

Mobility and 'Brain Drain'

The relationship between these longer term forms of mobility and research capacity in the key sending regions given the uneven nature of flows (the 'brain drain' phenomenon) was rarely identified as a concern. Discussion around this topic only arose in one focus group and stimulated a balanced debate.

Impact of the FP on Short Stay Mobility and Internationalisation

Without exception, respondents recognised the importance of short stays and visits to the building of international teams and networks. The opportunities for these forms of mobility under the FP were highly valued and constitute one of the most significant impacts. The FP supports a diversity of forms of mobility including within project meetings and events and training opportunities but also external activities and project dissemination. Mobility is often multi-directional involving many different locations and engagement with multi-national teams in those locations resulting in a highly international experience.

Participants in the Norwegian focus group for early career researchers were asked to estimate the volume of travel they had engaged in as a direct result of the project. They referred to frequent, often short trips to attend meetings:

Ten, ten trips abroad - both yearly meetings and other kinds of meetings and forums and everything (NFGE).

We have the project meetings, and it's 25, 30 or so. Lots of short trips from England, two or three days. Short trips and meeting at Schiphol Airport (NFGE).

Senior researchers from those regions where funding for travel was less readily available were more likely to value the impact of the project. The following participant in the Polish Focus Group referred to the impact of the network of excellence on his *own short term travel* emphasising the impact on senior researchers especially in less resource-rich contexts:

The Network of Excellence is financing networking, which means travelling, accommodation, meeting the people, and this is exactly what we never had money for. So this way I myself could travel much more than [before] (PFGS).

Mobility, Internationalisation and 'Place'

Indeed the relationship with 'place' (the specific geography of events) is often of little relevance; it is the international composition and experience of the people involved that is of significance in most cases. For reason of efficiency teams often meet in administrative offices in Brussels or on occasion at airports in rather 'neutral' de-contextualised spaces (as above). In other, rather fewer, situations, depending on the methodology employed location may assume a higher significance (a point we return to in the discussion about comparative method).

Mobility and Career Stage; National Differences

The opportunities for mobility generated under the FP had the greatest impact on early career researchers (irrespective of national location) and on researchers based in less resource-rich environments or from smaller countries. Senior researchers from new Member States were particularly likely to emphasise the value of the FP in this respect and the lack of other sources of funding to support this kind of international engagement.

Valuing Different Forms of Mobility

In terms of the kinds of mobility, ECR enjoyed and gained a lot of experience from large networking events with multiple partners and participants. Senior researchers were less likely to value these kinds of mobility experience and preferred to attend smaller focused encounters with researchers working in their specialist fields (including ECR). This to some extent reflects the complex roles of senior researchers in their home institutions and the pressure on their time resulting in a more strategic approach to mobility and networking. Where senior researchers held key management positions in their institutions and/or coordinating positions in the FP the pressure to engage in on-going mobility can be perceived as excessive and counter-productive.

Responsive and Flexible Mobility

Some concern was expressed by more senior researchers that within project mobility was too constrained by the project contract due to a lack of flexibility in the use of funds. This was seen to hamper dissemination in particular but also 'hold' teams to meetings that over time no longer seem essential or optimal. This concern is echoed in other contexts, reflecting a more general concern that the FP contracts (and the administrative machine dealing with them) can create something of a 'strait-jacket', inhibiting iterative and reflexive approaches to research.

Multiplier-Effects?

Notwithstanding the previous concerns, it was also clear that in many cases projects had encouraged new forms of mobility that were not necessarily envisaged in the contracts including, for example, the use of 'honorary fellowships' to support longer stays in some of the network projects and new events etc.

Post-Project Mobility

The importance attached to the FP in stimulating and funding these forms of mobility can be witnessed in the decline in mobility that was reported when projects had completed. This was seen particularly in relation to ECRs.

Mobility and Comparative Method

The nature of the project and its methodology and approach shapes mobility. Different approaches to comparative method play a major role in determining the level and quality of mobility experiences. The traditional case study approach favoured by funding mechanisms (with national partners undertaking their own national case studies) may restrict both mobility and the development of comparative analysis:

Q: So in that first project, did you have opportunities to travel to the other partners?

Not really. It was a national case study so it didn't imply any mobility (RC17)

In some (rather fewer) cases, researchers were undertaking forms of mobility directly linked to the fact that their empirical research was contextually embedded in particular geographical regions. This was more likely to take place with individual researchers and doctoral project for example.

Mobility and Work-Life Balance

Many researchers at all career stages expressed concerns about their ability to manage the increasing pressure to be mobile and their personal lives and responsibilities. Respondents referred to the specific 'mobility frictions' arising when people have children, partners or face health problems. The very high level of mobility expected with the FP pose serious challenges for some researchers. Shorter and carefully planned stays were often more manageable.

I just attended some meetings and conferences, this is all, I didn't yet go abroad maybe because also my family obligations. [I can travel for] a few days, maybe the week, this is not a problem. For so short period is not a problem but if I will go for a month or more then it will be (RC7).

Mobility and Non-Academic Partners

The 'expectation of mobility' is less evident in non-academic partners. Private companies participating in the FP are likely to see mobility in more instrumental/ strategic terms, focusing on outcomes rather than celebrating the process as an end in itself. It can be viewed as highly time-consuming.

Mobility and the Environment

Researchers are beginning to question the compatibility of high levels of project-related mobility and environmental objectives and looking for ways of minimising their carbon footprint:

'I've tried to reduce flying too actually for environmental reasons.. with the EU project that wouldn't have been possible' (RC13).

The Characteristics and Role of Networks in the Framework Projects

Introduction

The whole issue of networking in academic research is one that raises complex ethical and equality concerns. On the one hand, networking is understood to be a vital process that academics need to engage with in order to support the exchange of knowledge and ideas. Networking skills and the 'social capital' that a researcher accumulates is also seen of utmost importance to CV-building. Equally, many PIs and senior researchers are encouraged to involve their own early career peers and doctoral researchers in their networks, extending the opportunities that such networks generate for them. This is often seen as a critical component of effective mentoring (Ackers and Gill, 2008). On the other hand, recruitment through social capital and 'know-who' may lie in tension with open recruitment based on 'know-how', and may explicitly favour those people with extensive and effective connections. In addressing the networking issue in this study, we have tried to understand whether the networks that exist in the FP projects were already in existence, with the FP scheme simply adding value and resources to existing networks (network reinforcing); whether they are based on the same 'core' individuals but clustered new partners around them (network augmenting) or actually stimulated the creation of entirely new partnerships (network generating). The study has also examined the international quality of networks generated under the FP programmes.

The impact of the programme on senior researchers was discussed in the first chapter of this section, which noted the importance of breaking down the distinct dimensions of impact. Although very senior researchers were less likely to note a direct impact on their career progression 75.4% of survey respondents felt that their involvement in the programme 'improved access to major research networks'.

Summary Findings

Accessing Critical Research Networks

75.4% of survey respondents (predominantly senior researchers) felt that their involvement in the programme had 'improved their access to major research networks'.

Network Building

Most of the FP generated networks were based on existing 'core teams'. This is not surprising given that 86.6% of survey respondents had previous experience of working in large collaborative projects. In many cases the FP encouraged the integration of previously established networks – building a 'network of networks':

The first [FP project] I worked on was at the end of 96 - a two-year FP4 project. It was with the same people I did the one you were talking to me about, the same team. So we did one back in '96 to '98 and then we did one several years later. I am involved in applying for new funding with the same people again (RC13).

In some cases the previous networks were based on more informal professional relationships which were not based on other sources of funding. In such cases the FP effectively augmented these and in some cases institutionalised them.

The International Quality of Networks

The FP encouraged many of these pre-existing networks to evolve along geographical /international lines. Involvement in the FP played an important role in internationalising existing networks. The following senior German researcher underlines the importance of

internationalisation to the networking process in the Framework Programmes:

International co-operation, this is what makes the Framework Programme more attractive. It is more or less designed to fund international co-operation, something which is not always easy when you are going to national funding institutions. And of course it is also designed more or less to bring together research groups from different countries, I think this is the constitutional basis of it, and this is what we were looking for, and this is what we got (DFGS).

This was most evident and had the greatest impact in those countries and contexts where research is generally less internationalised the new and less research-intense regions and also in smaller countries. In these situations the networking function was seen to play an important role in overcoming national fragmentation in the SSH. Respondents from more research-intense environments were more likely to have strong pre-existing international connections.

The Strategic Evolution of Networks

The perceived requirements of the FP instigated new forms of international connections with more peripheral countries. In some cases senior researchers referred to the FP as a 'redistributive instrument' which played an important role in capacity-building in Eastern Europe in particular. In other contexts the 'strategic' selection of partners in these countries was seen to have a negative influence, increasing the administrative strains of project management and reducing research quality.

International Networking and the 'Additionality' Principle

The impact of the FP on the generation of opportunities for international networking was also evident in more resource-rich contexts. There was some suggestion here that the countries concerned were relying on the EU to support this level of activity rather than directing their own funds into it. Many senior researchers commented on the complementarity of national and FP funding streams with Member States providing core project funding (for staff etc.) and the FP providing the funding for international mobility and networking. This funding was not seen as peripheral but core to the design and execution of their particular (and often comparative) research.

Network Building, Recruitment and 'Openness'

Many coordinators describe the team-building process using the concepts of 'risk' and 'trust'. In practice they build on established teams drawing in other people often through personal contacts. Building teams on the back of tried and tested relationships reduces the risk involved and ensures that they can 'hit the ground running' in what are often very challenging projects. Having established this core they then feel confident to pull in one or two new partners in each new project and gradually the team evolves over time.

Recruiting Early Career Researchers through Networks

Recruitment through social capital and 'know-who' may lie in tension with open recruitment based on 'know-how' explicitly favouring those people with extensive and effective connections. The recruitment of early career researchers to work on FP projects is mainly achieved via networks and social capital and not via open recruitment:

How we recruited the researchers? Via the partners. So to bring together the partners, we worked with knowledge, with collaborators we knew, who we had already worked with. Then we extended the circle to other universities that we knew were working on that topic. It's very important from the outset to have relations of trust with the partners. Yes, before

we were working for a long time. It's very important. It would be impossible to engage ourselves in such a challenge without having a relationship. I think every partner had assistants, researchers or assistants or collaborators of our partners, who worked in partner institutes. We did not advertise for researchers, they were inside researchers and students (RC1).

This practice lies in tension with the principles of the Researchers' Charter and the Code of Conduct on the Employment of Researchers (and employment law). However it remains a dominant and often very effective means of recruiting early career staff to high risk and challenging projects.

Researcher Retention and Progression within Large Networks

In many respects the large FP projects can begin to operate as internal labour markets. The outcomes of the specific approach to networking in terms of the recruitment of the early career researchers by members of project teams results in a degree of retention and active career development within the networks themselves.

The Impact of Scale in the Quality of Networks

With few exceptions, researchers felt that the increase in scale of projects had reduced the quality of the relationships developed:

Far too many people. It's a science model – In the old ones with 5 or 6 partners you really got some work done – established close relationships. These worked much better and you got to know people (RC10)

Or, at least, that only some of those relationships would achieve a high level of quality and sustainability. Stronger research links developed at work package level where people are working in the same field, than at project level. Researchers generally value networks grounded in their research specialities. In some cases there was a concern that the style of FP project imposed somewhat artificial and generic networks onto the research community. Nevertheless researchers often managed to engage in different forms of activity at different levels and experience intense research connectivity in specific 'pockets' of interest.

Scale and Policy Impact of Networks

Policy impact is dealt with in a later section. However there is a strong relationship with networking here too. Effective policy impact tends to take place at this 'niche' level where the policy relevance is highest. Although policy impact at the level of abstraction associated with the larger networks may be limited, strong evidence of 'policy trickle-down' could be found at local level.

The Sustainability of Networks

The extent to which networks developed in the course of an FP project are sustained after project completion is heavily dependent upon the ability to attract new funding. In many cases networks lasted for the duration of the project although individual relationship within in them may well outlive the projects and be revitalised some years later:

The old EU team applied for framework seven funding two years ago and if they'd got it, it was very likely I'd have worked with them again but they didn't. These international networks are 'getting weaker every year'. My networks locally are getting stronger but the EU ones I still have vague contact but it's not as regular (RC13)

Field Specificity, Sustainability and Impact

Where FP projects have encouraged researchers to work in new and emerging fields they are more likely to continue to work with those researchers in future:

My links will continue because I am interested to stay in the research activities and this is a really good network to provide you with the skills ... and it's also a topic in Slovenia which is not so covered (RC11)

On the other hand, where researchers have been 'stretched' to work in areas somewhat marginal to their own core research interests, these networks are likely to lapse at project completion.

Network Sustainability and Purpose

The networks generated in the FP projects can perform different roles. Close connections based on long term relationships are often optimal for research and publication. The more formal and institutionalised networks are often more 'shallow' but serve a particular purpose in terms of helping to meet the political criteria of grant applications and also forming formal partnerships for doctoral exchanges.

The Value of FP Networks to Early Career Researchers

The FP Projects are clearly seen as a critical and valuable opportunity to support the networking and mentoring of early career researchers. Most early career respondents spoke very positively and enthusiastically about the opportunities the projects presented for networking and also the real value of these relationships.

The Value of FP Networks to Senior Researchers

More senior researchers were generally quite well networked already and less likely to attribute any significant impact to the projects in this regard. In fact they often identified their most critical networks as lying outside of the FP projects.

Project Outcomes

Introduction

This chapter considers the kinds of outcomes that are associated with the FP programmes. There are clearly a number of issues to consider in attempting to assess outcomes, including whether the outcome was a direct result of the project, the time lag between the project and the outcome (eg publication) and the extent to which outcomes can be measured. Traditional measures of outcome in academic careers are opportunities to present at conferences, publications and research applications. Tangible outputs such as publications and involvement in further grant applications enable early career researchers to access high quality positions and progress in their careers. Therefore, outcomes and outputs that are likely to achieve the aim of career progression are considered. In some cases, some types of project outcomes conflict with others. This is highlighted in the discussion. The main issue, which is a common one in research, is that immediate pressures can conflict with longer term aims. In terms of the framework projects, the main problem was that heavy demands in terms of project administration, meetings and in particular deliverables, can leave little time for publications and in the case of early career researchers, for completion of the PhD. The majority of people interviewed were academics, however one of the few private sectors participants pointed out that publication is not a major objective of private sector participants nor necessarily a key driver of their careers. In judging outputs we need to be aware of these differences in career paths and

personal goals and their impact on the volume and nature of outputs.

With the need to develop a future career (often in research) in mind, the main outcomes considered here are; presentation of results at conferences and publications; grant applications; project deliverables; completion of PhD/Habilitation; quality of positions.

Summary Findings

Measuring Outcomes

The concept of 'outcome' is quite complex and some outcomes are more amenable to measurement than others. This section considers a range of outcomes including publications and dissemination activity, grant application, human resource capacity and the quality of positions of early career researchers.

The Impact on Publication Behaviour

Both networks of excellence and integrated projects provide a diverse range of opportunities at many levels to support the active integration of researchers from a range of career levels and disciplinary and national backgrounds. These fora generate important opportunities for dissemination and spawn publications.

The Publication Output of Senior Researchers

Responses to the on-line survey (mainly senior researchers) indicated a strong impact in terms of the volume of publications. 83.7% said that their involvement in FP funded research had increased the volume of their publications and 78.7% said it had increased opportunities for academic publication and dissemination.

The Publication Output of Early Researchers

Much of the 'within project' networking provides early career researchers with opportunities for exchange and internal peer review of papers.

The combination of funding opportunities with network-building is what opens the doors for many of the early career researchers engaged with the FP projects. The networks of excellence play a particularly important role for early career researchers in this respect given their specific focus on networking and supporting international travel and events. They enable early career researchers to build diverse networks both with their peers and also with more senior researchers that are less confined to internal project objectives. Most respondents could immediately identify publications arising directly from the FP projects. This was of particular value to early career researchers and played a role in accelerating their career progression.

Publication Quality

The issue of publication quality is difficult to gauge. In many cases people linked quality to the ability to publish in international (English language) journals. Many respondents spoke of how their publications had become more international as a result of the project. The following senior Slovenian researcher expresses this view:

When I started twenty-five years ago we were very closed in our own science community and development was slow so I think with this opening to the international science community we became more productive, let's say more not more productive but our work became more of higher quality let's say (RC7).

The Benefits to Early Career Researchers

The FP projects have a strong tendency to encourage multi or co-authored work, often using the 'vehicle' of edited collections and special issues of journals to publish project outcomes:

We managed to publish two special issues that I co-edited with a colleague during the time-frame of the three years which is incredibly solid in terms of my career status (RC6).

These forms of outlet present clear and direct opportunities for early career researchers to publish alongside their senior peers. They often take away the pressure of submitting articles 'cold' to external peer review which can be a very bruising and stressful process. Internal peer review coupled with established relationships with publishers enables ECR to get their work published quickly and increase the volume and quality of their outputs.

The 'Risks' for Senior Researchers

Senior researchers also pointed to the impact that the projects had on publication volume:

[The project] may also have pushed you in trying to establish joint publications because ... there was pressure to come up in joint publications and that means special issues of journals or edited volumes (NFGS).

However, senior researchers in the SSH are often expected to produce sole authored publications with an emphasis on the specific quality (citations score) of journals in their sub-discipline (and these may be ranked for progression purposes):

that doesn't mean more quality, because I think individual articles often are higher quality than things that come into the joint publication. So that might be a bit different motives for doing that, visibility and promoting the programme could be an incentive for joint publications (NFGS).

Publishing in edited collections is often seen as lower status in comparison to individual peer reviewed papers and research monographs.

Publications and Capacity-Building

Even amongst ECRs there was a concern that some of the edited volumes might lack internal coherence and place pressure on editors to accept lower quality contributions from within the FP team for political reasons. The sheer complexity and internal diversity within large FP projects may contribute to this tension'. In some cases senior researchers suggested that this process contributed to the wider goal of capacity-building both for less research-intense countries and for early career researchers and should be viewed in that light:

You shouldn't interpret what we are saying as some sort of arrogance. Of course quality is a concern but I have also been positively surprised by what I've seen. And if there is a difference in quality why shouldn't we see this as the big project which is the EU in the political sense has seen, the task being to upgrade the other societies into democracy and so on (Senior FG).

Researchers in the new Member States indicated that their involvement in the FP projects raised publication standards through the mechanism of international peer review within the networks.

Publications and Non-Academic Partners

Partners in non-academic institutions are less likely to place an emphasis on publications. Career progression in these contexts is less driven by publication (if at all) and they are less likely to be in a position or to be motivated to publish once a contract comes to an end.

Project Deliverables and Publications

The issue of project deliverables was raised by many respondents in the context of research outputs. There was a strong sense that 'deliverable inflation' (or the need for an increasing number of internal deliverable reports) limited the ability to actually publish from projects:

The research process is constrained by deliverables which you already said you're going to deliver and you – so that's part of the inflexibilities that the framework structure. The research core features are actually very rigid and didn't really listen to the concerns and the issues on other sites and because you've got to set this up before the project starts, there's very little time to be flexible (RC8).

This reflected a number of concerns:

- The pressure to produce more deliverables was increasing exponentially over time.
- That internal deliverables were often not read or peer reviewed.
- That these internal reports were not amenable to publication as such and would have a limited if any impact on either the academic 'state of the art' or policy engagement. This very much limits the role they can play in terms of CV-building for early and mid career researchers.
- That this reduced the time available to focus on other higher quality and higher impact outputs.
- That the relationship of deliverables to timetables and financial triggers created an artificially constrained 'strait-jacket' limiting the ability of researchers in the social sciences and humanities to work in a response and reflexive way.

Allowing Sufficient Lead Time to Assess Impact; Publication outcomes

Many respondents emphasised the importance of taking care when evaluating the outcomes of projects to leave enough time for projects to mature and publications to emerge. In practice this will usually happen towards the end or several years after formal project completion (in the case of monographs for example).

Grant Application Activity

Success in securing research grants plays a critical role in the performance management criteria of many research institutions. Securing research funding also enables researchers to develop research ideas and engage in research, often with the support of research assistance which enables them to work more efficiently and productively. In turn research grants provide entry-level employment positions for early career researchers.

Building Skills and Confidence in Grant Application

FP projects have an impact in terms of building skills and confidence in research application processes in general and more specifically in 'socialising' them into the FP approach:

It has certainly given me a very good understanding of how to apply for funding at the European Union and so I've participated in two other bids. ...having been socialised with a European way of doing applications was very good because I could kind of see how things were going to be evaluated and assessed and the language of bench marks, time

lines and deliverables (RC5)

Positive success in this area can be seen in a number of cases where mid career researchers or researchers from the new and smaller Member States feel confident enough to contemplate taking on leadership roles in future applications.

Success in Other EU and FP Applications

It was clear from the study that a large majority of the more senior participants had either previously secured FP funding or were planning to apply again in future calls. Securing further FP funding was often the only or at least the primary means of sustaining networks and research relationships in these large international and multi-disciplinary projects.

Success in National Funding

The experience or very fact of having been involved in an FP-funded project often triggers engagement with national funding bodies either to co-fund / augment FP projects or to develop follow-up work:

One possible effect of having the programme is that it has become one of the criteria for getting money from the research council for example that you're also taking part in international networks like the FP programmes. So it's good to take part in this (NFGS).

In some cases the emphasis is very much on skills development but in others the cudos of having EU funding was viewed as a, sometimes necessary, trigger to access national sources.

Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Completions

Several ECRs referred to the specific outcomes in their cases related to the completion of doctoral or habilitation theses. There is a slight caveat to this however, with a number of other respondents including some supervisors expressing some concern at the level of 'distraction' (however useful) that participation in large projects can cause perhaps through the level of travel and networking activity but also in some cases, being 'required' to work on the projects on behalf of the supervisor.

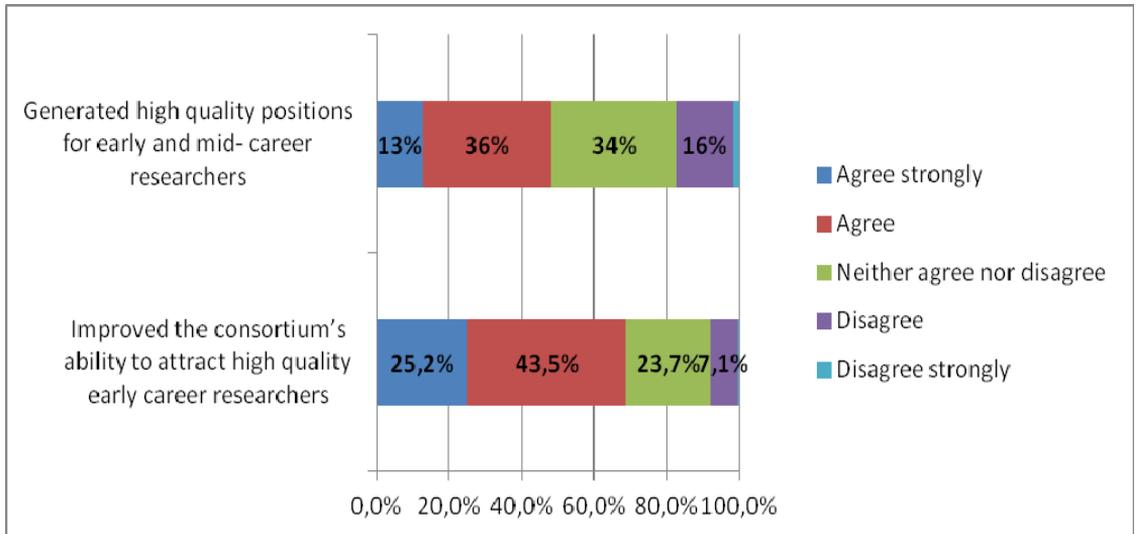
Assessing Impact on Human Resource Capacity

Access to high quality human resources is critical to research success both from the perspective of the employing institution or principal investigator and the early career researchers engaged as a result.

Attracting High Quality Researchers

The findings of the on-line survey of senior researchers suggest that the FP projects are having an important impact on consortias' ability to attract high quality early career researchers.

Figure 45: The 'Human Resource's Impact of FP funded projects



Source: On-Line Survey

However, concern was expressed that financial constraints made it difficult to recruit more experienced researchers. In practice many teams employed relatively inexperienced early career researchers who required considerable support as they were unable to fund more experienced or mid career researchers.

The Quality of ECR Positions

A more mixed response was received with regards to whether or not the positions generated were in themselves of high quality. Whilst under half of respondents agreed with this statement (48%), a further 34.4% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. Findings from the interviews and focus groups showed that, whilst many researchers recognised the value of the projects in terms of the actual research experience and opportunities for mobility and publication etc. they were concerned about the insecurity of positions.

Fixed Term Positions in the FP Projects

Contractual insecurity at early career level is an endemic problem. The FP projects cannot in themselves generate secure positions. The employment opportunity generated mainly via the Integrated Projects often forms one more bridge in a complex and frustrating patchwork of employment opportunities. By definition most early career positions funded directly out of the integrated projects will be fixed term in nature. In addition to this many are part-time reflecting the specific tasks and workload management of the applicants. Furthermore, many young researchers are often left in a position of uncertainty, not knowing when exactly their positions will end.

[The] main drawback of research careers is insecurity; it's the prospect of having short term employment until you're 50 or 60 years old which is obviously hard to combine with establishing a family or whatever. It can be stressful sometimes especially when you're working with contracts, as some of us are, always doing proposals for employers. Very

insecure, getting the proposals, what about next month, you haven't got a plan in for it, but then again you have deadlines all the time (NFGE).

These concerns were expressed most strongly in those national contexts less accustomed to fixed-term and contract-based recruitment.

Investment in Skills and Training

Introduction

The experience and the training received during the FP programmes is obviously extremely important in terms of career development for researchers at all levels, but in particular for early career researchers. One consideration in terms of training is that researchers may choose different career paths both within the scope of academic careers and beyond; management, networking skills and other generic skills are likely to be important for both research and other careers. The importance of learning in networks and from senior researchers and of mentoring in the publication process were discussed above. The following section develops these discussions and considers the impact of the FP programmes in terms of the variety of training on offer, both informal on the job training and mentoring and more formal training programmes, and different types of training, whether specific to research or more generic.

According to the results of the on-line survey, the majority of FP-funded projects supported the development of training programmes for junior researchers (65.8%). Unsurprisingly a smaller proportion of respondents (42%) reported that their project had supported the development of training programmes for mid-career and senior researchers.

This section first discusses the variety of methods employed and the diverse range of skills that the projects are nurturing. The types of training varied enormously, as is illustrated in the opening discussion. The main distinctions were between formal training and on the job training; broad training aimed at the whole collaboration and training for specific groups (especially early career researchers and doctoral students), and specific research skills (hard skills) and more generic management skills (soft skills). The section then goes on to identify the main areas of impact in terms of training, which were found to be inter-generational mentoring and supervision, comparative method, inter-disciplinarity, soft skills (in particular learning how to network effectively and individual autonomy and team working skills).

Summary Findings

Formal Training

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Apprenticeship 'On-the-Job' Training

Although many of the network projects included structured training often tailored to the needs of ECRs, much of the training that was taking place and highly valued took the form of 'on-the-job' apprenticeship training which may prove more effective in the SSH/FP research context:

I don't think we're training people, it's an more information exchange experience (RC5).

Training in Research Skills

Respondents were less likely to identify major impacts in terms of training in substantive research methods. There was no evidence, for example, of specific training in comparative methods. In some cases they referred to the opportunities offered at institutional level reminding us that the career management and training of early career researchers in the FP projects is not the sole responsibility of the projects themselves but also of the employing /hosting institutions, many of which will or should provide training for them.

Inter-Generational Mentoring and Supervision

The opportunities generated within the large networks of excellence and integrated projects for high quality mentoring and supervision were valued far more by respondents than formal training courses. Indeed, it is in this area that the highest levels of impact can be identified.

Many ECRs and researchers in more isolated locations spoke of the great value they attached to the mentoring opportunities the projects generated giving them the opportunity to gain feedback from highly established and renowned senior researchers in other countries:

I went to this conference and presented a first draft of what I intended to do in my PhD and they had invited professors from the US as well as other member institutions. We had the opportunity to present our work and the advice I got at this conference really helped me a lot to set up my research design and improve it. So if you have the chance that a senior researcher observes what you are doing, it was really a great benefit (RC22).

Mentoring within the FP teams thus complemented and supported the supervisory process. It is important to emphasise the role that supervisors play in terms of introducing their researchers into networks and helping them to integrate.

Coordinators also attached great value to the role that FP projects played in the mentoring of early career researchers. This was of particular value in the context of the relatively junior staff that often had to be employed due to funding limitations.

Mentoring Mid-Career Researchers

The benefits attached to mentoring within large FP projects were not restricted to early career researchers (although these were the main beneficiaries). Being involved in the FP projects enabled mid career researchers to bridge the gap between the security of carefully supervised early career positions and the isolation of 'independent' mid career researchers.

Supervision Cultures and Hierarchy

The involvement of ECR in the FP projects had enabled some of them to witness at first hand a rather different form of academic culture with less hierarchical relationships and a greater respect for and recognition of the contribution of early career researchers. In time this should support cultural changes and more democratic ways of working:

This co-operation of the professors, famous and the international arena was incredible. I think especially here in Poland I feel that there is very high barrier between the distinguished professors and the students, that somehow there is this hierarchy and you have to observe. Now in Western Europe I think in the academic culture there is a state of co-operation, somehow introducing younger scholars into the academic quarters supporting ... which I think is very important as well (PFGE).

Comparative Method

Many respondents at all career stages emphasised the impact that their experience of working on FP projects has had on the development of comparative research in the field of social policy. Several argued that this paradigm shift could not have happened in the absence of EU funding and noted the marked impact it has had on their own careers as comparative researchers. In the words of one of the very senior researchers interviewed:

The [networks of excellence] have had a really huge impact on my own career. EU money has been very very important for comparative work. In my view comparative social policy – comparing welfare states - everyone puts it down to Esping-Andersen in 1990. But not really; it's become so huge because of EU funding. I don't think the group would have got together without EU funding and that has been incredibly important. It's changed ways of thinking cross nationally about social issues – quantitatively and qualitatively (RC10).

The level of impact that the FP projects have had on the development of comparative method is reflected in many of the interviews. Respondents felt strongly that this work could not have taken place in the absence of EU funding.

The Impact on ECR's Experience of Comparative Research

Senior researchers are most vociferous in their support for the role that comparative work plays in the FP programme. For early career researchers too, the schemes present unique opportunities for them to engage in comparative work which is much less available at national level.

The study underlines the importance that respondents attach to EU funding in the development of comparative approaches. On the other hand, it indicates the lack of alternative sources of funding to enable researchers to take this kind of research and the skills that they have developed in the FP projects, forward.

The Lack of National Funding for Comparative (and especially Qualitative) Research

The impact of the EU on the development of comparative method reflects the fact that most national funding bodies do not support this kind of research or provide significantly less opportunity for it. This is particularly the case in relation to the networks of excellence. Whereas some Member States will offer grant schemes for research projects involving partnerships with researchers in other countries (albeit on a much smaller scale) the networks of excellence are unique in providing support for international networking and travel outwith the confines of a specific research project.

Imposing a Model of Comparative Research?

Some senior researchers questioned the particular 'model' of comparative research adopted in many FP funded projects (of having national case studies undertaken by national researchers) and suggested that this is not necessarily the optimal approach.

Inter-disciplinarity

One of the greatest challenges for researchers working on FP projects arises from the inter-disciplinary environment perhaps reflecting the relative lack of progress in the promotion of inter-disciplinary working in the Member States. The FP explicitly encourages inter-disciplinary approaches and the impact in this area is very high. All of the respondents were working in multi or inter-disciplinary teams and valued this context highly:

It was really inter-disciplinary because we have geographers and economists and this is very useful because a lot of research now should be multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary

because the problems are so complex and this is a condition in this more integrated project.

Although ECR were most likely to reflect on this dimension of impact, more senior researchers in some research and national contexts had less experience in this kind of work and the FP projects might have been their first real experience of this level on inter-disciplinary engagement.

Soft Skills

Respondents listed a whole swathe of soft skills that they had acquired as a direct result of the FP project. These included presentational and publication skills, familiarity with the administrative 'machinery' of Brussels, being able to gain skills in the organisation of dissemination events and learning how research systems work in different Member States, time and project management skills (amongst many others). Reference was also made to developing skills in networking particularly in informal contexts:

This was the best PhD conference ever because they taught us such soft skills as how to write a contribution for a journal, how to address a journal. We had also to prepare a poster-presentation so this was mainly on soft skills and this was very valuable I think (RC22).

Individual Autonomy and Team Working Skills

Progression in research careers often requires early career researchers to show evidence skills both in independent working and in team skills:

It was good because I was given a lot of freedom within the project especially in the parts I was responsible for which were the policy implications and the interviews. There was not so much interference from the other researchers in the project so yeah it was great and I learned to work individually but also of course within the guidelines of the group. I would say it has given me both independence and also the sense of the team, of working in a group (RC15).

Whilst doctoral researchers should, in principle, be carefully supervised and nurtured, this supervision should also build their confidence and ability to develop their own research ideas and approaches. This has in many respects been the area where greatest emphasis has been put, especially in the social sciences and humanities where people are less accustomed to working in large teams. On the other hand, there is a growing recognition of the value of team skills, both in the areas of teaching and research.

Team-Working in SSH

The process of applying to the FP for funding necessitates a positive attitude and high levels of skill in large scale collaboration and team working, often working with very complex and diverse parties. The overwhelming majority of social science and humanities researchers will not have experienced this kind of team working before.

Team-Working and ECRs

Early career researchers working on the projects had found that they could achieve a very positive balance between the demands and opportunities of team working and the ability to develop as individual and autonomous researchers.

Policy Impact and Research Careers

Introduction

An important component of this impact assessment concerns wider issues around the

effectiveness and social relevance of social science and humanities research funded under the Framework programmes. Concerns around policy engagement and social usefulness are evident in a number of the evaluation objectives. Our interest in networks extends not only to academic (research) connections but the extent to which effective relationships are being developed and nurtured with non-academic partners. The work on structuring effects also goes beyond analysis of the immediate effects on research policies at national level to consider, 'the factors shaping impact at inter-sectoral level'. This section of the report focuses on those dimensions of policy-impact directly linked to researcher careers. This includes attention to the specific issue of training and capacity-building – whether the FP projects are helping to build a new generation of researchers with the skills in and commitment to engagement with policy makers and users and also to the role that this type of activity plays in career management and performance-assessment processes.

A recent British Academy Report (Punching our Weight: The Humanities and Social Sciences in Public Policy Making) identifies academic social science as an 'under-valued asset' limiting the ability to support 'fully informed, rounded approaches to public policy-making' (2008). It argues that the UK Government is failing to draw upon the contribution of the social science research base as effectively as it could and suggests that the commissioning system is partly to blame. The study found that around 60% of government research budgets were being allocated to 'short-term projects to meet current political and administrative demands', often undertaken by private consultancies outside of the university sector, which the report argues is contrary to the Government's own guidelines, that encourage it to 'broaden their advice' and support longer-term knowledge development'.

Responses to the on-line survey of senior researchers indicated some impact in this area. Just under a third (31.8%) of respondents replied that their involvement in FP funded research in FP5 and 6 had resulted in participants engaging in new forms of dissemination (such as research blogs, TV programmes etc.). A further 34.3% were neutral on this point and 33.9% disagreed.

When invited to comment specifically on the impact on their own careers nearly half of all respondents (48.7%) agreed that SSH funding had, 'increased their exposure to new forms of policy engagement'. Just over a third (35%) agreed that it had increased 'opportunities for engagement outside the research sector' (with government and industry, etc.).

In order to capture these processes the interviews with researchers included questions on their engagement with policy within the context of their FP-funded work. A number of researchers reported that engagement with policymakers was likely both to impact on policy and to enhance their skills and to improve their career prospects. In many cases it is difficult to assess the concrete results of engagement with policymakers. There are cases where there had been engagement with policymakers, the direct impacts were hard to assess. And in other cases policy impact was not immediate but the research may have had a broader impact in terms of 'agenda setting', according to one researcher. Policy impacts may also take time to emerge, in particular if the type of impact is quite broad. Policy impact is a two-way process, and is dependent both on researchers to approach policymakers and for policymakers to be willing to engage with an act on the advice of researchers. The level of impact is dependent on the design of the project, in particular the extent to which project impact is a project aim and the extent to which engagement with policymakers is explicitly built into the project. These issues are explored in greater depth below under the following Sub-sections: Capacity-building in relation to policy impact and research careers; attitudes of policymakers and policy impact and research design.

Summary Findings

Capacity-Building in Relation to Policy Impact

The explicit policy-orientation of the FP and thematic priorities has encouraged a focus within many if not most of the projects on policy engagement at some level. In the process this has placed an emphasis within project teams on the acquisition of new skills and approaches and proved to have a highly motivating effect on some researchers.

Seniority and Policy Impact Skills

The effect on skills acquisition and development was not restricted to early career researchers. Particular attention was given by Polish researchers to the impact the FP project had on policy impact suggesting that their involvement had helped to build a new culture of knowledge transfer activity in Poland.

Complexity, Abstraction and Policy Transfer Processes

Policy transfer works optimally when the research is highly targeted and immediately and directly relevant to the recipient policy community. The large and complex nature of most FP projects generates key challenges in this respect. Having said that, interesting and important forms of policy impact were evident in many cases engaging policy makers in certain strategic aspects of projects and often at a local level (with national partners):

'Certainly, it certainly has helped create a culture of evaluation and accountability in relation to research and policy.' (Irish policymaker)

Policy Engagement and Skills

The FP project played an important role in helping ECR and those researchers with less experience in this area to develop the skills necessary to promote knowledge transfer activities. This includes skills in interviewing or working with policy makers in the research process and developing new approaches to project dissemination.

Achieving effective policy engagement usually requires a level of investment and the nurturing of relationships to convince policy-makers that the research is of immediate relevance to current policy agenda. This implies an attention on the part of researchers to timeliness. Policy makers are rarely interested in research that doesn't immediately relate to current policy priorities.

The thematic priorities in the Framework programmes (reflecting current political and social objectives) plays an important role in facilitating policy engagement (over and above the more responsive modes of funding often available at national level). Nevertheless, the specific substantive focus of some projects eases the potential for active knowledge transfer.

European Commission

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The social sciences and humanities have been very responsive to the Commission's political declarations and policies to develop the European Research Area (ERA). This is the report from a study aiming to evaluate the contribution of the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) parts of the Framework Programme on the European Research Area in SSH. At the end of the 5th Framework Programme (FP), the 3rd call of the Socio-economic Research Key Action included two themes which were clearly influenced by the ERA discussion: Theme 4 - The development of European infrastructures for comparative research in the social sciences and humanities; and Theme 5 - Support activities to stimulate the development of social sciences and humanities in the ERA. In FP6 ERA objectives were incorporated into "Priority 7 on Citizens and Governance in the Knowledge Based Society", and especially in its use of Networks of Excellence (NoEs) and Integrated Projects (IPs) which aimed at structuring the research scene. The study examined the impacts of these programmes in four domains: the research policies for SSH in Member States, the structuring effects of the new instruments; the importance of the support for research infrastructures in the context of the SSH programme; and the impact of the programme on the careers of participating researchers.

