

FET Flagships and their Governance in Horizon 2020

Board of Funders (BoF)

Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure

November 2018

Preamble

FET Flagships (shortly FFs) are long-term, very large scale research initiatives aiming to solve an ambitious challenge, such as for example: understanding the human brain or exploiting the potential of graphene or of the second generation of quantum technologies. With Flagships, the Commission proposes a new partnering model for long-term European co-operative research in the European Research Area, demonstrating the potential for common research efforts. The model may take the form of a large Core Project (CP), or a set of closely cooperating research Projects, playing a leading role in the implementation of a FF initiative and a set of Partnering Projects (PPs) also essential for achieving the Flagship's objectives, and being an integral part of the initiative. This model may evolve for best meeting the Flagships' objectives and novel perceived needs.

Half of the Flagship budget will be invested by the Commission into the CP. The other half is expected to come mainly from the Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC), and possibly the private sector, through financing PPs and also through in-kind contributions to the Flagship from participating organisations¹.

It is therefore necessary to create an appropriate Governance body, the Board of Funders (BoF), bringing together the main funders, namely representatives from the Member States (MS) and Associated Countries (AC) of Horizon 2020 and the Commission with the purpose of programming activities in support of the FFs.

The BoF is part of the Flagship implementation model in Horizon 2020 as described in the Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2014) 283² of 16 September 2014.

Mandate of the Board of Funders

The BoF contributes to the development of a common European effort based on the research roadmaps of the FFs. It fosters synergies and coordination of activities planned at national, regional or transnational levels in the areas of the FFs. It also promotes the innovation potential of the FFs and discusses opportunities for international cooperation.

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

² http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=6812

The BoF covers all FFs. It may meet in different configurations according to the agenda topics under discussion.

Members

- The Participating Countries (Member States and Associated Countries of Horizon 2020)
- The European Commission

Main objectives

- Exchanging information on the overall direction and strategy of the FFs
- Fostering synergies between the FFs and related activities funded at national, regional or transnational levels
- Programming activities in support of the FFs
- Promoting an environment that stimulates innovation by linking the FFs S&T developments to innovation policies at national and European level
- Fostering international collaboration

Role and tasks

The main role of the BoF is to discuss and possibly plan the financial support to the FFs for their whole duration.

The BoF Members:

- Are informed of recent developments of the FFs and discuss their overall progress
- Exchange information on European, national and regional activities in the areas of the FFs
- Address the orientation and funding possibilities of their respective programmes and their interplay with the aim to maximise synergies and help FFs meet their objectives
- Promote an enhanced coordination in programme development, including possibly on FFs governance aspects and joint implementation of programmes and initiatives

They also:

- Discuss the selection and integration mechanisms of PPs within the FFs
- Help promote an environment that stimulates innovation by linking the S&T developments to innovation policies at regional, national and European levels.

Membership and Rules for Participation

1. The Participating Countries

The BoF is open to all those Member States and Associated Countries of Horizon 2020 that are interested in the FFs, whether they have policies or programmes related to the FFs or not.

Each participating country needs to be represented in the BoF at the right policy level (ministry, funding agency, etc.) where decisions about national/regional programmes and budgets are planned.

Each participating country is considered as one member of the BoF and decides on the composition of its delegation. Depending on the way research is organised in the different participating countries, each delegation may have one or more lead delegates who represent the participating country in the BoF. They can be accompanied by other delegates for those agenda items where their specific expertise is required.

2. European Commission

The European Commission is represented by the Director and/or Units in charge of FFs activities in DG CONNECT. It provides secretarial support to the BoF through organising and convening the BoF meetings and drafting the minutes of the meetings (which need to be approved by the BoF members).

Representatives of the CP and PP³ Consortia are invited to participate to the BoF meetings, as appropriate.

Duration of the mandate

The BoF is established for the duration of the FFs. However, it may stop its operations earlier, if it is so agreed by its Members.

Chair of Meetings

The BoF meetings are co-chaired by the Commission and the participating countries.

The Commission's co-chair is nominated by the Director in charge of FFs in DG CONNECT.

The co-chair is elected by the BoF members (participating countries only) for a 2-years mandate (renewable).

Operational procedures

³ PPs will organise among themselves to nominate their representatives.

The BoF meets once a year. Additional meetings of the BoF can be planned depending on the circumstances.

BoF Members wishing to propose items for inclusion in the agenda of a BoF meeting will send their proposal to the co-chairs at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. Proposals may include revisions to the present Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure and/or request to terminate the BoF operations.

The BoF co-chairs define the agendas of the BoF meetings and circulate them to the BoF Members 10 days in advance of the meeting.

To the extent possible, the BoF decisions are taken unanimously. In case this is not feasible, decisions are taken by voting. Each Member has one vote of equal weight and decisions are taken by simple majority.

The BoF normally meets in Brussels, although it can meet in other locations if mutually agreed by the BoF Members.

To the extent possible, BoF meetings are organised back to back with the ERC-MSCA-FET Programme Committee meetings. The Commission will cover any additional travel expenses that such meetings may generate to complement the reimbursement already foreseen for the ERC-MSCA-FET Programme Committee meetings (e.g., through dedicated Commission funding, the FLAG-ERA ERANET and its likely follow-up activities in Horizon 2020 or other).