

Athens, April 2013

Guidelines

Greek National Roadmap for Large-Scale Research Infrastructures

Part of ex-ante conditionality “1.2 The existence of a multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritization of investments”

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Introduction

Research Infrastructures (RIs) constitute a vital element of the European Research Area. As mentioned in the flagship initiative “Innovation Union” of Europe2020 policy, Research Infrastructures are synonymous to **“investment for the future”**.

Research infrastructure means facilities, resources and related services that are used by the scientific community to conduct research in their respective fields and covers scientific equipment or sets of instruments; knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives or structures for scientific information; enabling Information and Communications Technology-based infrastructures such as Grid, computing, software and communication, or any other entity of a unique nature essential to achieve excellence in research¹. Such infrastructures may be ‘single-sited’ or ‘distributed’ (an organised network of resources)².

During the current economic crisis, upgrading of existing infrastructures of national relevance and establishment of new ones, where necessary, has to be developed via long-term strategic planning and prioritization processes aiming to promote innovation, scientific excellence and international cooperation and to encourage the creation of jobs for highly skilled personnel.

Given the considerable investments needed for the development and maintenance of Research Infrastructures, the need for a well thought strategy and a Roadmap is essential especially in view of the new programming period 2014-2020. Moreover, this particular process is an **ex-ante conditionality** for the support of Research Infrastructures’ through Structural Funds: **EC rules require from each country to identify priorities in order to schedule funding commitments for Research Infrastructures, based on areas with growth potential in science and innovation, as well as on their socio-economic impact** (see **Annex A** for more information).

Within that scope, the General Secretariat for Research and Technology, as the state policy making and funding organization for Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) has already initiated – through the appointment of a dedicated **Working Group**, since October 2012 - the elaboration of a concept basis and a systematic process for the formulation of a national strategy and a roadmap of Large Scale Research Infrastructures^{3,4}.

Furthermore, to oversee the whole process of the Roadmap a high level **Advisory Committee** was appointed consisting of representatives of the main stakeholders of the research, academic and innovation ecosystems.

¹ In line with Article 2(a) of Council Regulation (EC) N° 723/2009 of 25.6.2009 on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), OJ L 206, 8.8.2009, p. 1.

² Based on EC definition (see **Annex B**)

³ As a follow-up roadmap of “Greek Large Scale Infrastructures Roadmap: A 10 to 15 Year Outlook”, 2006

⁴ **Large-Scale infrastructures:** the expression "large-scale research infrastructures" describes infrastructures in which it is possible to perform all the research activities in individual research processes in the scientific field of the research infrastructure, while at the same time, they operate as units with their own administrative structure.

1. Objectives

The main objectives of the National Roadmap are:

- **To support the decision making process in compliance to strategic priorities in Research, Technological Development and Innovation aiming to enhance the effectiveness of investment for Research Infrastructures, at a national and regional levels**
- **To support the development of an evidence based national strategy in the framework of international negotiations, linked to EU priorities and, where appropriate, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures – ESFRI**

The Roadmap for Research Infrastructures will be an instrument for blueprinting future calls for investment on new infrastructures or major upgrades of existing ones, through the use of Structural Funds and other national funding sources.

To that aim, GSRT launched a **Call for Expression of Interest** addressed – though a *bottom-up process* - to the research community of the country. The process comprises of two main phases as follows:

A) **Phase A'** – initial mapping: collection of brief information of RI proposals – *completed on Feb 17th 2013*

B) **Phase B'**: detailed submission of comprehensive RI proposals

Its targets have been:

- The assessment of needs for upgrade of existing Research Infrastructures or investment in new, large scale Research Infrastructures of national priority. For this reason, it is necessary to collect information on both operational infrastructures and infrastructures whose preparatory phases or national networking has already been financed (FP7, Structural Funds, National Funds etc.)
- The identification of needs for international cooperation in relation to Research Infrastructures
- The identification of direct *or indirect* participation in projects of the ESFRI roadmap
- The identification of priorities from the Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) ecosystem, and in combination to the expected socio-economic benefits for the country and the regional locations of Research Infrastructures host installations or nodes.

This process, based on the evaluation described in a subsequent section, will lead to the National Roadmap for Large-Scale Research Infrastructures by the end of 2013, based on the obligations of Greece towards DG Regio of the European Commission. The publication of the “**National Strategy and the Roadmap for Large-Scale Research Infrastructures 2014 – 2020**” will be a significant milestone towards the completion of this process, and will be a useful asset for promoting the national research & innovation policy during the framework of the Greek EU Presidency in the 1st semester of 2014.

Moreover, the development of a national roadmap is a key step in a multi-level decision-making and quality management process. It will initially lead to earmarking budget for RIs and setting up of priorities, ensuring accordingly evaluation of all projects based on uniform criteria across all fields of research.

2. Main guidelines for the National Roadmap for Research Infrastructures

Apart from compliance to the definition of Research Infrastructures given above – the proposals should take into account the following **guidelines** (describing the main features of the roadmap):

- **National relevance**

To be included in the Roadmap, Research Infrastructures should, cumulatively:

1. Address a broad national interest (*defined in the strategy for research and innovation plan or the multi-annual Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 with the European Union*)
2. Enable cutting-edge research at the national level, with international visibility
3. Promote innovation at a national and regional levels
4. Form part of a coherent structure, with nodes available at one or more locations in Greece, in terms of distributed research installations or access points
5. Provide access to researchers, industry and the broader public domain in the country and internationally

- **Effective Networking and Synergies**

To be included in the Roadmap, Research Infrastructures should facilitate an effective coordination and networking among relevant research teams and establish critical mass in the corresponding research fields. Therefore it is recommended that Research Infrastructure proposals should:

- A) Integrate similar research infrastructures into one network and submit one proposal for that (through its coordinator)

AND

- B) Be consistent with experience and priority plans set by the research & innovation ecosystem

These two conditions will be considered in relation to the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3), which is currently being drafted by GSRT. *To that aim, endorsement letters from user communities and Regional Authorities are encouraged.*

- **Scientific & technical excellence and outstanding strategic importance**

To be included in the Roadmap, Research Infrastructures should receive high marks in the peer review process described in a subsequent section. Furthermore, Research Infrastructures with competitive advantage at the international and regional level (including RIs of the ESFRI Roadmap) will be prioritized.

3. Main actors and their roles

A. GSRT Working Group

The GSRT Working Group is responsible for the following:

- Coordination of the two phases of proposals' submission
- Planning, support and overall coordination of the evaluation process
- Support of the Advisory Committee
- Coordination of the open and targeted consultation processes, especially concerning issues of strategic prioritization of the proposed RIs on the basis of the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization (RIS3)

B. Advisory Committee

The main task of the Advisory Committee is to supervise the overall evaluation process, in terms of methodology & criteria, leading to the Large-Scale RIs Roadmap.

The members of the high level Advisory Committee are institutional representatives of the main stakeholders of the National Research and Innovation ecosystem, high caliber scientists, and representatives of the private sector and of the Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructures, Transports and Networks, which is responsible for the national development strategy for the forthcoming programming period of the Structural Funds (2014-2020).

C. Evaluation Committees

The evaluation procedure has been designed according to international best practices. Following the description below, for the 1st thread of evaluation, all proposals will be evaluated by committees covering the main thematic sectors of the call and comprising of high-level international experts. Each proposal will be evaluated by 3 experts, through an online evaluation platform at GSRT. Upon completion of the evaluation of individual proposals, **consensus meetings** will be led by the Chairs of the Committees (*per thematic group of proposals*). The shortlists will be presented in targeted **negotiation meetings** (*per thematic area*).

4. GSRT Call for expression of interest & submission of proposal abstracts: 1st phase of the process

This particular phase was launched in February 2013 for submission of abstracts, through a dedicated online platform: <https://apps.gov.gr/minedu/institutes/infrastructures/evaluation2013/>.

The main objective of the 1st Phase was to assist GSRT in creating a preliminary record of the interested parties and to initiate the search for evaluation panels. Interested parties were invited to fill out a brief questionnaire that was accompanied with detailed guidelines for the proposers along with a brief description of the whole evaluation concept.

Upon conclusion of the 1st Phase of the call, GSRT organized an information event (21st of February) in collaboration with the National Documentation Center (National Contact Point for Research Infrastructures Programme in FP7) in order to facilitate the preparation of the 2nd Phase of the procedure.

This event provided an opportunity for extensive Q&A and exchange of views with proposers and other interested parties (such as representatives of the national regions, ministries, etc.).

Further to this event and responding to many requests for information on the submitted proposals, GSRT took the initiative to include an additional, intermediate step in the process. It provided access to all proposers to summary information (*titles and abstracts*) of all proposals submitted in the 1st Phase. The main aim of this intermediate step was to facilitate deeper networking between the research teams and to encourage submission of common proposals in the 2nd Phase.

The 1st Phase of the Call for expression of interest resulted to the submission of 138 proposals submitted mainly by academic and research institutions.

Distribution of these proposals according to their primary scientific fields is as follows:

- 13 proposals from the field of Social Sciences and Humanities,
- 31 proposals from the field of Biological and Medical Sciences,
- 31 proposals from the field of Physical Sciences and Engineering,
- 20 proposals from the field of Material Sciences and Analytic Facilities,
- 9 proposals from the field of Energy,
- 20 proposals from the field of Environmental Sciences, and
- 14 proposals from the field of e-infrastructures.

5. 2nd phase of proposals' submission and evaluation

The evaluation framework is based to a large extent to relevant practices followed internationally for RIs evaluation and design of RIs Roadmaps at the European Commission level (ESFRI Roadmap) and the Member State level. Moreover, particular attention will be given to socio-economic aspects in view of the possibility to allocate funding from Structural Funds for establishing Regional Partner Facilities⁵ for the next programming period 2014 – 2020.

Upon completion of submission of the comprehensive proposals (*in the 2nd Phase of the procedure, through electronic submission platform – deadline: June 2013*) the evaluation process will commence, in **two threads**: The first will concentrate on evaluating the scientific, technical merit and innovation potential of the proposed RIs by panels of international experts. The second will guarantee convergence of the first thread with RIS3 priorities as planned at the national and regional levels, with GSRT coordination.

1st thread: Evaluation of the scientific and technical merit and innovation potential of the proposals will be done through peer review by high ranking experts of international standing on the basis of the following **group of criteria**:

1. Scientific, technological potential & maturity of the RI
2. Effective networking & synergies within the knowledge triangle
3. Access policy, governance and sustainability
4. Innovation potential and socio-economic benefits

⁵ **Definition: Regional Partner Facility:** Regional Partner Facility (RPF) is a research infrastructure of significant national or regional importance in terms of the socio-economic benefits, training and attraction of researchers and engineers, acknowledged as a “cooperative infrastructure” towards a pan-European ESFRI infrastructure or an international research infrastructure. The quality of the **RPF**, taking into account the level of its scientific services, management and access policy, should have the same standards met at the European-level research infrastructures.

Each project will be evaluated individually in each of the above dimensions as well as in comparison to other projects.

The Advisory Committee will oversee the whole evaluation process, working closely with GSRT Working Group, and aiming at optimal planning and execution of the evaluation.

The scientific evaluation will be conducted by thematic Evaluation Committees (comprising of a minimum of 3 experts each) covering the main research fields as identified from the 1st stage of submission.

The Advisory Committee will oversee the evaluation process and advise GSRT on the membership of the evaluation panels.

Evaluation of the individual proposals will start in June 2013.

Each proposal will be evaluated by at least three (3) experts on the basis of an **evaluation form**.

Upon completion of this step, the thematic evaluation committee will form a consensus opinion for each proposal and will also submit a recommendation regarding the placement of the project proposal in the National Roadmap.

Proposals will be graded on the basis of the above criteria with a range of 1 to 5, where:

- 1- Poor
- 2- Low / insufficient
- 3- Average
- 4- Very good
- 5- Excellent

For a proposal to be considered for inclusion in the National Roadmap it must attain a grade from 4 to 5 for each of the aforementioned groups of criteria (min. total grade: 16/20).

The main groups of **criteria** for the evaluation of proposals consist of the following aspects:

1. Scientific, technological potential & maturity of the RI

- The significance of the Research Infrastructure for specific research fields addressed, *including*:
 - *Current state-of-the-art*
 - *Expected benefits for the Greek research system as location for conducting cutting edge research at an international level*
 - *International reputation and visibility, involving the partners and principal investigators*
 - *Impact of combating the brain-drain of highly skilled human resources (research & technical staff)*
- Degree of interdisciplinarity
 - *The effect of RI on strengthening interdisciplinary research in Greece*
- Perspectives for scientific & technological breakthroughs in the field of operation of RI
- Maturity of the RI project
 - *Proven ability to continuously follow state-of-the-art, experienced human resources & operational readiness*

2. Effective networking & synergies within the knowledge triangle

- Competence complementarity of the partners and added value of the national RI network at the regional, national and international level
- Degree of networking and creation of critical mass
- Extent and types of the user community
- Potential for increasing existing or for creating new research groups in the field of operation of RI
- Education and training for students, researchers, technicians and engineers
- Synergies and networking capacity in relation to other Research and Innovation initiatives at the national and international level (*with emphasis on ERA integration effects, e.g. ESFRI participation*)

3. Access policy, governance and sustainability

- Access policy for researchers
 - o *Transparent policy, incl. transnational access activities, conditions for provision of access, addressing remote access needs in relation to availability of e-infrastructures and data management issues*
- Access policy for industry, addressing IP rights, costs and confidentiality
- The management structure & governance of the proposed research infrastructure
- Technical feasibility, incl. human resource issues & cost-effectiveness of the proposed infrastructure, based on:
 - *Level of requested funding and envisaged sources of funds*
 - *Multi-annual financial plan with funding sources information, as per:*
 - *Cost of investment*
 - *Operational Cost*
 - *Cost for decommissioning*
 - *SWOT analysis*
 - *Long-term sustainability plan of the investment*

4. Innovation potential and socio-economic benefits

- Contribution to increase the potential for innovation and technology transfer through the construction and operation of the RI, based on expected results and spill-over effects of the RI
- Addressing major societal challenges
- The integration of the RI in scientific, business and social environment in Greece and expected socio-economic benefits at the regional and national level

2nd Thread: Strategic prioritization of the proposed RIs, as set within RIS3 at the national and regional levels and the National Strategic Framework for Research and Innovation, as drafted with GSRT's coordination with the guidance of the National Council for Research and Technology (NCRT). The strategic prioritisation will be held on the basis of:

1. Expected economic and social benefits for Greece as location for conducting cutting edge research at a national, regional and international level, considering also the importance of cross-border cooperation
2. The relevance of the RI to the national strategic priorities for Research & Innovation
3. Its expected impact on the national and regional development and competitiveness

The assessment of the strategic importance of the proposed RIs (*coordinated by GSRT, in consultation with relevant policy bodies, national and regional authorities*) will also take into consideration the expected impact of the RIs on additional socio-economic issues (e.g. employment, environment, related commercial / business activities) towards the national & regional economy.

The projects selected through the above procedure will comprise the core of the National Roadmap. All other RIs that meet the above criteria will also be included in a separate Annex of the Roadmap, and will be eligible for funding in future calls and for inclusion in future revisions of the Roadmap, without specific budgetary commitments. Upon completion of each stage of funding of RIs and on the basis of recommendations of the Advisory Committee, we aim to establish a procedure for periodical revisions of the Roadmap and to form the basis for the creation of a **National Registry of Research Infrastructures**.

All research infrastructure projects selected through the **two-thread procedure** described above will be included in the national roadmap development process, irrespective of intended sponsoring and financing.

The detailed process described above is presented schematically in **Fig 1**:

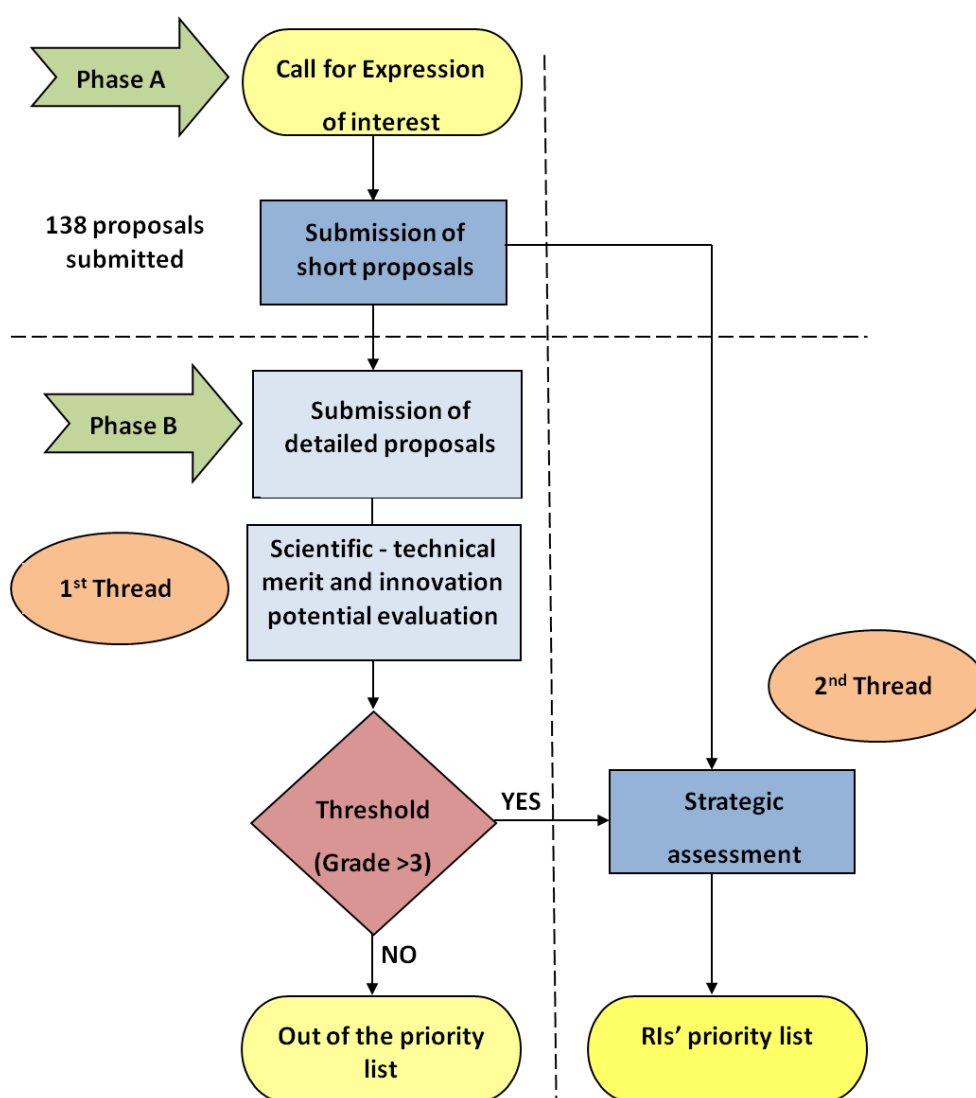


Fig 1: RI proposals prioritization process for the Roadmap

6. Evaluation of the scientific, technical merit and innovation potential

Evaluation of the **scientific and technical merit and innovation potential** will comprise of **three main steps**, after the submission of comprehensive proposals at the GSRT – through **online submission** process (*provisionally: May 2013*).

GSRT will recruit international experts for the evaluations of the proposals and will make sure (through the GSRT Working Group) that a **dedicated project group** will be established to oversee the process.

- **Individual evaluation**

- a) Every proposal will be evaluated by three (3) reviewers who will submit **individual evaluation reports** (*based on a predefined evaluation sheet*). The individual evaluation will be based on common criteria for all topics to guarantee an impartial process.
- b) Interim reports will be summarized, compiled and presented by the rapporteur (*one of the members of the experts' panel will be the rapporteur*)
- c) The individual evaluations will be discussed within the relevant evaluation committee (*in order to prepare, based on consensus meeting, as internal consultation process regarding the qualitative evaluation of the individual projects according to the agreed criteria - the **consensus report** for every individual proposal*)

- **Comparative evaluation of proposals**

On the basis of all individual evaluations, the committee prepares a **comparative evaluation** that leads to the establishment of **ranking groups**, on the basis of the total grading of individual evaluations.

In case of proposals with equal total grading, priority will be given to those with higher mark in criterion **“Scientific Excellence, Maturity and innovation Potential”**. In case both proposals have the same mark in this criterion, the other criteria should be encountered.

Each project is evaluated in each separate dimension in comparison to the other projects in all other areas of science and subsequently assigned to a ranking group. The main result of the evaluation process consists of a differentiated comparison of the projects in the individual dimensions of evaluation. The aim shall be to achieve straightforward comparability of the projects in the individual dimensions.

This overall result forms one of the bases of the subsequent assessment of the strategic importance of the projects.

Targeted hearings / presentations for all proposals graded above 9, per scientific area, are foreseen. Presentation and discussion of the proposals with the responsible scientists, involving external reviewers and the policy bodies (GSRT, Advisory Committee, national authorities), are envisaged.

Following those hearings, each project should receive a **brief evaluation report** and a recommendation for further action that takes account of the project's maturity and the urgency of its implementation. Analysis of **strengths and weaknesses within the respective field of research** must be included.

This evaluation will **not** lead to the final ranking of the proposals. The aim is to create a basis for **prioritisation by the political decision-makers** who, in turn, will also take into account the results of the cost assessment, given the preliminary financial considerations for the next programming period 2014-2020.

- **Preparation and approval of the evaluation report**

GSRT will approve the evaluation report and submit it to the Advisory Committee and the National Council of Research and Technology for the final consultation and assessment of the results.

The **final evaluation report** published by GSRT and the National Council of Research and Technology should also contain a **standardised brief description** of each project (as an input for the Registry for Greek Research Infrastructures).

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| The roadmap will be continuously assessed and revised in 3-years intervals. |
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7. Provisional time-schedule

| Main Phases | Provisional dates |
|--|---|
| Response to the call for expression of interest – 1 st Phase (submission of short proposals) | <i>Deadline 17 February 2013</i> |
| 1 st information event | <i>21 February</i> |
| 2 nd information event – announcement of assessment criteria & timetable for the roadmap | <i>April 26th 2013</i> |
| Launching of the 2 nd Phase for submission of comprehensive proposals | <i>May 2013</i> |
| Deadline for submission of comprehensive proposals | <i>June 2013</i> |
| Deadline for evaluation of proposals – 1 st thread | <i>Beg. September 2013</i> |
| Consensus meetings / discussion on national & regional priorities | <i>Mid September 2013</i> |
| Submission of evaluation reports from the Panels | <i>End September 2013</i> |
| Targeted meetings / Consultations per thematic area & presentations of high ranked proposals to the evaluation panels → Strategic prioritization process | <i>End September – beginning October 2013</i> |
| Formulation of the draft Roadmap (GSRT) | <i>October 2013</i> |
| Open consultation | <i>First week of November</i> |
| Publication of the Greek Roadmap for Research Infrastructures | <i>End of November 2013</i> |

Annex A: Guidance on Ex-Ante Conditionalities – Draft – Part II, European Commission, DG Regional and Urban Policy (pp. 15-17)

A.1-2 Research and innovation infrastructure⁶

| Thematic objectives | Investment priorities | Ex ante conditionality | Criteria for fulfilment |
|--|--|---|--|
| 1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (R&D target) (referred to in Article 9(1)) | ERDF: - Enhancing research and innovation infrastructure (R&I) and capacities to develop R&I excellence and promoting centres of competence, in particular those of European interest | 1.2 The existence of a multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritization of investments. | – An indicative multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritization of investments linked to EU priorities, and, where appropriate, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures - ESFRI has been adopted. |

1. When to assess applicability?

The conditionality is applicable, if a MS or region is planning to allocate funding to enhance research and innovation infrastructure (R&I) and capacities to develop R&I excellence and promote centres of competence, in particular those of European interest (Art. 5.1 (a) of the ERDF Regulation).

2. Definitions

Research infrastructure means facilities, resources and related services that are used by the scientific community to conduct research in their respective fields and covers scientific equipment or sets of instruments; knowledge-based resources such as collections, archives or structures for scientific information; enabling Information and Communications Technology-based infrastructures such as Grid, computing, software and communication, or any other entity of a unique nature essential to achieve excellence in research⁷. Such infrastructures may be ‘single-sited’ or ‘distributed’ (an organised network of resources).

Innovation infrastructures are facilities, such as technology, science or business parks and centres of competence.

⁶ The table below is based on the Council compromise text.

⁷ In line with Article 2(a) of Council Regulation (EC) N° 723/2009 of 25.6.2009 on the Community legal framework for a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), OJ L 206, 8.8.2009, p. 1.

The European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) is a strategic instrument to develop the scientific integration of Europe and to strengthen its international outreach. The competitive and open access to high quality Research Infrastructures supports and benchmarks the quality of the activities of European scientists, and attracts the best researchers from around the world.

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p><i>An indicative multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritization of investments linked to EU priorities, and, where appropriate, the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures - ESFRI has been adopted.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The strategic policy framework for smart specialisation contains an indicative multi-annual plan for budgeting and prioritization of investments linked to EU priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The prioritisation responds to the needs identified in the smart specialisation strategic policy framework; ○ The prioritization of investments took into account existing R&I infrastructures and capacities in by Europe and as appropriate, the priorities identified by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI). ○ The framework outlines available and foreseen budgetary resources for investments in R& I infrastructures and centres of competences and indicates various sources of finance [and indicative amounts]. | | |
|--|--|--|

Annex B: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. EU basis for including the *ex ante* conditionality in the CPR proposal

- Conclusions of the Competitiveness Council on 'A reinforced European research area partnership for excellence and growth' (11 December 2012)

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/intm/134168.pdf

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union (COM (2010) 546 final of 6.10.2010), commitments 24/25 and Annex I "Self-assessment tool: Features of well performing national and regional research and innovations systems":

http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/innovation-union-communication_en.pdf

- Conclusions of the Competitiveness Council: Conclusions on Innovation Union for Europe (doc. 17165/10 of 26.11.2010):

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st17/st17165.en10.pdf>

- Communication from the Commission "Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020" COM(2010) 1183:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/smart_growth/comm2010_553_en.pdf

2. Extracts of relevant documents

- Conclusions of the Competitiveness Council on 'A reinforced European research area partnership for excellence and growth' (11 December 2012)

In these Conclusions, the Council endorses the need for strengthened partnership in the field of research infrastructures and:

"Emphasises the need for renewing and adapting the mandate of ESFRI to adequately address the existing challenges and also to ensure the follow-up of implementation of already on-going ESFRI projects after a comprehensive assessment, as well as the prioritisation of the infrastructure projects listed in the ESFRI roadmap."