

CSF - WORKSHOP

At April 28th, the commission has carried out a stakeholders' workshop in order to present the consultation main findings and in-depth study conducted by Deloitte regarding "Assessing the Effectiveness of Simplification Measures under FP"

The Commission received about 3800 responses to their survey regarding "Administrative costs for managing grants under the 7th EU Framework Program for Research and Technological Development" in order to identify the administrative effort (working time) of FP7 beneficiaries for participating in FP7 funded projects, in order to define - by using the standard cost methodology approach for impact assessments (established by the SecGen (who is that, explain) - a "baseline scenario" against which different options will be considered, mainly for the CSF, and also in order to gather respondents' views on 3 possible scenarios for CSF:

- **Project-specific lump sums for entire projects**
- **Extended use of flat rates, lump sums and scales of units**
- **Continuation of current cost reporting approach but with a simplification of the cost eligibility criteria**

The results of the workshop are summarized below:

It seems that number 1 priority for concrete and feasible simplification measure in the programme succeeding to FP7 (759 responses) is simplifying time recording without time sheets:

1	Simplify time-recording (no time sheets)
2	Simplify reporting (including financial), re-think system of deliverables
3	Use output-based with lump sums for whole projects

The preliminary conclusions where that:

- The major burden always lies with the Coordinator. The difference is more important for the negotiation & GA signature phase and the project management phase

- Playing with different factors (e.g. type of beneficiaries) does not make huge differences. If we really want to reduce the admin costs, we have **either to cut a task/process or decrease its frequency**
- Possibilities for administrative burden reduction are mostly **linked to the grant management phase**, including the "soft" law and rules (how these are implemented in practice by the services).

The Deloitte study was based on an in-depth Assessment with 90 coordinators and WP leaders in order to find the effectiveness of simplification measures under FP7 and to review ideas for future programmes, this study revealed the following highlights and recommendations:

- Ensure the right balance between simplification and stability of the rules. Test further simplifications against their stability over time
- Make the new Research Clearing Committee responsible for tackling discrepancies of approach (centralisation of communication, training of EC staff, the participants' portal, and consistency of interpretation of rules)
- Simplify the rules by reducing the number of funding schemes and cost models (will decrease naturally the number of mistakes)
- Adapt the management approach in favour of more trust (better balance between science and administration). Test different trust-based approach
- Propose a single grant to the coordinator or a limited number of grants to the major participants to reduce the administrative burden for some of the project partners and the Commission.
- Ensure audit traceability throughout the project life cycle, so that errors can be explained and avoided in the future
- Ensure flexibility in the implementation of rules, taking into account country-specific financial rules
- Align the administrative process of FP7 with standard internal business processes of the beneficiaries, where possible
- Publish "deadline-free" calls

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