

EU research and innovation funding consultation open

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At the beginning of February the European Commission launched a consultative [Green Paper](#) to explore the future of EU research and innovation funding programmes, ahead of the next Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) to be presented in June.

The EC's current research and funding initiatives (the Seventh Framework Programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, and The European Institute of Innovation and Technology, and the Cohesion policy) have a combined budget of over €150 billion. As the paper outlines, the European Council would like to see these initiatives focus more on the [Europe 2020](#) growth strategy, recognizing that Europe needs a 'step change in its research and innovation performance' if it is not to be outperformed by emerging economies. To this end the EU plans to increase spending on R&D to 3 per cent of GDP by 2020.

Questions raised by the consultation cover how EU research funding can be made more accessible and streamlined; how to balance funding between small, targeted projects and larger, strategic ones; to what extent should societal challenges influence research agendas; how the EU can take into account the broad nature of innovation (including non-technical innovation, eco-innovation, social innovation, etc); and how small and medium-sized enterprises should be supported at the EU level.

In order to promote responses to the Commission has created a Consultation [website](#) which allows interested parties to complete an online questionnaire or submit a written responses. The consultation closes on 20 May 2011.

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