Platform of bioeconomy ERA-NET Actions

(H2020 Grant number 52635)

Perspective Document on Inclusiveness

FOSTERING INCLUSIVENESS

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Executive summary

PLATFORM 2's Fostering inclusiveness task aims at measuring the performance of the so-called "lower performing countries" (LPCs), identifying among them good performers in the bioeconomy ERA-NET initiatives and using their experience as a positive example when targeting those countries that continue to perform low. The analysis of performance goes beyond general statistics. It looks not only at participation of LPC's in bioeconomy ERA-NET initiatives but also at their role when participation is secured (type of activity they perform, participation in joint transnational calls and their success rate, etc.).

In order to perform the analysis, a statistical overview of LPCs in bioeconomy ERA-NETs was made and three surveys were carried out – one for ERA-NET project coordinators, one for Societal Challenge 2 National Contact Points (NCPs), Project Committee (PC) members and SCAR members and one for LPC funding agencies participating in the bioeconomy ERA-NETs.

The information gathered through the three surveys for ERA-NET project coordinators, NCPs / PC and SCAR members served as the basis for the PLATFORM Inclusiveness Master Class held in May 2016 for LPCs with the aim to support and empower selected pilot countries to increase their involvement in the bioeconomy ERA-NETs (please see the Report of the Master Class on Inclusiveness).

Recommendations on **how to secure participation** of LPCs include:

- Ensure contact with all relevant LPC institutions early in the process (last minute additions are many times the reason for the lack of more active involvement)
- Build on old networks, use hierarchy (contact high-level officials), increase the intensity and number of direct contacts, face to face meetings and info sessions in LPCs
- Raise awareness among **decision makers** - organize a high-level event to promote ERA-NETs
- Promote potential benefits of participation in ERA-NETs to stakeholders (e.g. funding organizations) - underlining achieved results in ERA-NETs and sharing best practices
- Dedicate a Work Package to integrate new members, including activities such as training and other capacity building activities (e.g. development of competences for leadership roles) as well as workshops allowing for the exchange of best practices to overcome barriers of national Research & Development systems
- Provide guidance on active involvement in ERA-NETs, offer administrative support and create a mentoring program
- Understand the reasons of LPCs to join your network (developing the research community followed by an invitation to join! and having a strong research community in the field)
- Understand reasons for LPCs not joining your network (lack of national funding, administrative burdens, missing strategies regarding public-public partnership involvement, lack of a systematic approach / unclear national priorities / criteria for ERA-NET participation, lack of coordination among national funding agencies, insufficient experience with ERA-NETS)
- Develop a communication mechanism on PLATFORM level involving LPCs in different ERA-NET inclusiveness activities

Once participation is secured, LPCs are most often active partners. Task and Work Package leadership is only rarely taken up. When this happens it is due to experience with the task, knowledge and competence to perform the task and in half of the cases also encouragement by the consortium to do so, closely followed by the need for personnel funds. As often LPCs are active they are also passive partners, mostly due to lack of personnel, but also lack of experience and the fact the position of task or Work Package leadership is not offered to them.

When it comes to **JTC participation**, problems most often include the lack of project proposals with researchers from LPCs and the inability to use funds due to lower ranking, only then followed by the inability to secure

funds. The issues with JTC participation (both in terms of funding agencies participating to the call and the researchers being part of successful consortia) could be tackled by:

- Organizing special events to share experience with newcomers on encountered difficulties and best practices
- Inviting funding agencies from non-participatory LPCs as observers in JTC activities
- Adjusting the EC co-funding rate according to country stratus (more flexibility in budgetary procedures)
- Encouraging meeting organization in LPCs with side events for researchers
- Launching targeted calls for proposals
- Providing partnering tools to find collaborators
- Allowing in-kind contributions for LPCs
- Ensuring JTCs include research topics relevant to LPCs (e.g. including more basic research too, taking into consideration smart specialization strategies of LPCs)
- Ensuring geographic balance in consortia (as a specific requirement for consortium composition)
- Using a wildcard system (invitation to full proposal stage)
- Encouraging consortia to include LPCs, also only in full proposal stage
- Including mobility schemes for LPCs as an evaluation criterion
- Giving preference to proposals with LPCs if proposals equally scored

It is **important that the LPCs become an integral and empowered part of the team**, which can be secured through:

- Proactively giving LPC members in WP/task leadership responsibilities, thus giving the LPC partner more importance in the consortium
- Devoting a WP on Inclusiveness, giving WP leadership to an LPC
- Increasing the number of experts from LPCs involved in the ERA-NET (as Strategic Advisory Board, Scientific Evaluation Board members)
- Inviting funding agencies from not-participating LPCs as potential partners to observe ERA-NET activities (by attending meetings with covered costs), allowing them to join the consortium at a later stage (possibly by securing enough funding for their participation).

LPCs should be treated as equals, but other partners should understand and be sensible towards their difficulties, providing additional support when needed!

1. PLATFORM's Fostering inclusiveness activities

PLATFORM 2's Fostering inclusiveness task aims at measuring the performance of the so-called "lower performing countries" (LPCs) as defined in the Spreading Excellence and Widening Program of H2020, identifying among them good performers in the bioeconomy ERA-NET initiatives (including ERA-NET + and ERA-NET Cofunds), and using their experience as a positive example when targeting those countries that continue to perform low. The analysis of performance goes beyond general statistics. It looks not only at participation of LPC's in bioeconomy ERA-NET initiatives but also at their role when participation is secured (type of activity they perform, participation in joint transnational calls and their success rate, etc.).

In order to perform the analysis, first a statistical overview of LPCs in bioeconomy ERA-NETs was made using statistics gathered by PLATFORM on country participation in different FP6 and FP7 bioeconomy ERA-NET initiatives.

Later an extensive **survey for ERA-NET project coordinators** was carried out with the aim to:
1) acquire an overview of LPCs' participation in the ERA-NET consortium, including information on the role of the LPC in the consortium, the type of activities performed by LPCs, and measures taken to increase their participation,
2) receive special insight into LPCs' participation in joint transnational calls, including that on the success rates of partners from LPCs in the call, the challenges LPCs face in call participation, and possible inclusiveness mechanisms encouraging participation of partners from LPCs in project proposals.

Based on the survey for project coordinators two additional surveys were launched:
a) A **survey for the Societal Challenge 2 National Contact Points and Project Committee members** (in most LPC countries the two functions are typically performed by the same person), and the SCAR members.
b) A **survey for the LPC funding agencies participating in the bioeconomy ERA-NETs** (contacts were identified by the bioeconomy ERA-NET coordinators).

The information gathered through the three surveys for ERA-NET project coordinators, NCPs / PC and SCAR members served as the basis for the PLATFORM Inclusiveness Master Class held in May 2016 for LPCs with the aim to support and empower selected pilot countries to increase their involvement in the bioeconomy ERA-NETs.

LOW PERFORMING COUNTRIES

Member states: Bulgaria (BG), Croatia (HR), Cyprus (Cy), Czech Republic (CZ), Estonia (EE), Hungary (HU), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Malta (MT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovakia (SK) and Slovenia (SI).

Associated countries: Albania (AL), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA), Faroe Islands (FO), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (MK), Moldova (MD), Montenegro (ME), Serbia (RS), Turkey (TR) and Ukraine (UA).

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2. Statistical overview of Low Performing Countries participation

First a statistical overview was made about the participation of LPCs in FP6 and FP7 bioeconomy ERA-NET initiatives as well as in the first ERA-NET Cofunds of H2020. The basic statistics are summarized in the tables bellow.

Table 1: Countries not participating in any of the ERA-NETs until 2015

NON-PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES
Albania
Bosnia and Herzegovina (1 observer status)
Faroe Islands
Montenegro
Moldova
Ukraine

Table 2: Participation of LPCs in FP6, FP7 and H2020

| FP 6 | | | | FP7 | | | | | H2020 (2015) | | |
| 14 ERA-NETs | | | | 33 ERA-NETs (incl. ERA-NET +s) | | | | | 2 ERA-NET cofunds | | |
COUNTRY	PARTNER	%		COUNTRY	PARTNER	OBSERVER	%		COUNTRY	SUM	%
PL	6	43%		PT	16*	1	45%		EE	2	1
PT	5	36%		TR	19		58%		PL	2	1
SI	4	29%		SI	12	2	36%		TR	2	1
CY	3	21%		EE	10		30%		BG	1	0,5
HU	2	14%		LT	10	1	30%		CY	1	0,5
TR	2	14%		LV	10	2	30%		CZ	1	0,5
BG	1	7%		HU	9	1	27%		HU	1	0,5
CZ	1	7%		RO	8	2	24%		LT	1	0,5
EE	1	7%		CY	7		21%		PT	1	0,5
HR	1	7%		CZ	7		21%		RO	1	0,5
LT	1	7%		PL	7	2	21%		BA	0	0%
RO	1	7%		BG	3		9%		HR	0	0%
BA	0	0%		LU	3		9%		LU	0	0%
LU	0	0%		MT	3	1	9%		LV	0	0%
LV	0	0%		SK	3	1	9%		MK	0	0%
MK	0	0%		HR	2	2	6%		MT	0	0%
MT	0	0%		MK	1		3%		RS	0	0%
RS	0	0%		RS	1		3%		SI	0	0%
SK	0	0%		BA	0	1	0%		SK	0	0%

* with one coordination of an ERA-NET

Table 3: Participation of LPCs – cumulative view in absolute and relative terms

COUNTRY	SUM FP6	SUM FP7	FP6%	FP7%
TR	2	19	14%	58%
PT	5	16	36%	48%
SI	4	12	29%	36%
EE	1	10	7%	30%
LT	1	10	7%	30%
LV	0	10	0%	30%
HU	2	9	14%	27%
RO	1	8	7%	24%
CY	3	7	21%	21%
PL	6	7	43%	21%
CZ	1	7	7%	21%
BG	1	3	7%	9%
LU	0	3	0%	9%
MT	0	3	0%	9%
SK	0	3	0%	9%
HR	1	2	7%	6%
MK	0	1	0%	3%
RS	0	1	0%	3%

Table 4: Participation of LPCs: total sums

COUNTRY	FP6	FP7	H2020	TOTAL
TR	2	19	2	23
PT	5	16	1	22
SI	4	12	0	16
PL	6	7	2	15
EE	1	10	2	13
HU	2	9	1	12
LT	1	10	1	12
CY	3	7	1	11
LV	0	10	0	10
RO	1	8	1	10
CZ	1	7	1	9
BG	1	3	1	5
HR	1	2	0	3
LU	0	3	0	3
MT	0	3	0	3
SK	0	3	0	3
MK	0	1	0	1
RS	0	1	0	1

The analysis shows a growing trend of participation among LPCs at least when comparing FP6 and FP7 results, while the results for the first H2020 ERA-NET cofunds in the bioeconomy area are not so promising. However conclusions on a fall of participation based on only two initiatives having already started at the time of analysis (summer 2015), should not be drawn. Further trends need to be observed with new ERA-NET cofunds starting in the end of 2015 and in 2016.

3. Survey for ERA-NET project coordinators

The survey was answered by project coordinators of 22 different ERA-NET initiatives spanning from FP6 to H2020. The ERA-NETs include: ACENT, ANIHWA, BIODIVERSA, CAPITA, CIRCLE-2, COFASP, CORE ORGANIC, CORE ORGANIC PLUS, ERA SUSAN, ERA-CAPS, ERA-GAS, ERA-IB-2, ERA-NET BIOENERGY, ERASYNBIO, ERASYSBIO+, ETB-PRO EUROTRANSBIO-PRO, EUPHRESCO, FACCE SURPLUS, FORESTERRA, ICT-AGRI 2, SUMFOREST, WOODWISDOM-NET+.

Table 5: LPCs participation in ERA-NETs (survey)

COUNTRY	NO. OF ERA-NETS
PL	12
LV	11
PT	10
SI	10
TR	10
EE	7
LT	7
HU	6
RO	6
SK	4
BG	3
CZ	3
HR	2
CY	2
LU	1
BA	1
MK	1
RS	1

Table 6: LPCs role in ERA-NET (survey)

ROLE IN ERA-NET	BG	HR	CY	CZ	EE	HU	LV	LT	LU	PL	PT	RO	SK	SL	Σ
ERA-NET coordinator											1				1
WP leader					1					4	4			2	11
Task leader	1				1	2	3			3	6			2	18
Active partner	1	1	1	1	6	3	8	3		9		6	1	6	45
Passive partner	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	4	1	1	4		2	4	27
Active observer	1						1					1	1		4
Passive observer						1	1							1	3
Joining ERA-NET in continuation	1				2	2	3	1		1	2			1	13
Leaving ERA-NET in continuation						2				1	1			2	6

EUROTRANS-BIO / ETB-PRO experience with activities to involve LPCs

EuroTransBio started very early (1st project phase, 2006) performing joint calls, so a certain structure was established at a time when most of the LPCs did not yet have a critical mass in biotechnology SMEs, and even much less funding programmes for them. Out of this rationale the idea of participation in the consortium for new members was to participate in joint calls quickly and not to remain observers. Thus a screening process for potential new members was set up to assess already in the accession process the potential and obstacles for contributing in joint calls. The ETB-PRO project had a **dedicated work package on enlarging the consortium**. Activities were directed towards the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Turkey. These activities included **identifying potential partners, contacting them, sending information, presenting information** (**in person**) and inviting them to negotiations for joining the consortium. In the Czech Republic, Estonia, Slovakia and Slovenia, despite several attempts, no potential partner (funding agency) could be identified**. Often mails were not answered** or it was declared that there was **no potential partner in the country**. In Poland and Portugal **potential partners were identified but declared that there was no funding programme fit to contribute**. For Romania and Turkey it turned out in the accession process that their **proposed programmes would not be able to contribute** and the **conditions set** by the two countries **would render it impossible for most of the other partners to continue to participate**.

Three reasons were given for the discontinuation of partnership:
- when entering the self-sustainable phase, only partners who saw a reasonable cost/benefit ratio for their organisation continued to participate
- there was a national reorganisation of funding administration, leaving no funds available for joint calls
- the ERA-NET's focus was not sufficiently applied for the particular organisation.

Ten ERA-NETs reported on performing activities to include LPCs or increase LPCs participation in the ERA-NET consortium. Seven ERA-NETs were successful in achieving this goal, while three were not, despite the effort, which included sending invitations for participation to previously identified contacts in LPCs, visiting the country to get them involved, and dedicating an entire Work Package on consortium enlargement.

Experience from ERA-NETs whose inclusiveness activities have yield positive results include:
- *personal contact developed in other ERA-NETs / other EU activities (e.g. SCAR) was used to get in touch with the relevant agencies / ministries*
- *contacting the person directly responsible for funding and putting much effort into convincing him to participate*
- *using participation in one ERA-NET as leverage for commitment in new ERA-NET*
- *building on old networks*
- *having a dedicated WP to integrate new members can yield significant results. It should however not stop at integration, and should include fostering new relationships through information sharing, surveys of opinions on (call) processes (e.g. ERA-CAPs where the work package, even if not solely dedicated to LPCs, helped secure membership from many LPCs, including EE, HU, LV, PL and RS)*
- *invitations for participation sent by high-level officials (e.g. CORE-ORGANIC where the Danish Minister of Agriculture and Food send an invitation directly to colleague ministers to join the ERA-NET, thus securing participation from CZ, EE, LV, LT, LU, PL, SI and TR)*
- *organizing a workshop dedicated to LPCs (e.g. FORRESTERA, ERA-CAPS)*
- *providing support in terms of administration to ease the accession process (ERA-SUSAN)*
- *personal contact is regarded as very important also when it comes to securing participation in JTCs*

Table 7: Participation in Joint Transnational Calls (JTCs) and number of funded projects (including EUPHRESCO*)

COUNTRY	NO. OF CALLS (total 97 calls)*	COUNTRY	NO. OF FUNDED PROJECTS	COUNTRY	AVERAGE FUNDED PROJECTS PER CALL
PL	21	PL	35	BG	7
LV	16	PT	31	SI	3,9
PT	13	SI	31	PT	2,4
TR	11	TR	16	PL	1,7
SI	8	LV	13	TR	1,5
RO	8	RO	8	CZ	1,3
LT	7	LT	7	EE	1,2
EE	6	EE	7	RO	1
HU	5	BG	7	LT	1
SK	5	CZ	4	LU	1
CZ	3	HU	3	HR	1
LU	3	LU	3	LV	0,8
RS	2	HR	1	HU	0,6
BG	1	SK	0	SK	0
HR	1	RS	0	RS	0
CY	1	CY	0	CY	0
BA	0	BA	0	BA	0
MK	0	MK	0	MK	0

*It must be noted that EUPHRESCO alone has published 50 calls throughout its lifetime. However the calls are different from a typical ERA-NET call, as they are non-competitive. Furthermore, no data was provided on the number of calls each LPC participated in, but data on the number of projects was provided. As the data provided distorts the overview, a second table was compiled with Euphresco taken out of analysis.
The average number of calls published per ERA-NET is 1.8.

Table 8: Participation in JTC and number of funded projects (excluding EUPHRESCO)

COUNTRY	NO. OF FUNDED PROJECTS	COUNTRY	AVERAGE FUNDED PROJECTS PER CALL
PL	35	SI	2,4
PT	27	PT	2,1
SI	19	PL	1,7
TR	16	TR	1,5
LV	12	CZ	1,3
RO	8	RO	1,0
EE	6	EE	1,0
LT	6	LU	1,0
CZ	4	RS	1,0
LU	3	BG	1,0
RS	2	HR	1,0
HU	2	LT	0,9
BG	1	LV	0,8
HR	1	HU	0,4
SK	0	SK	0,0
CY	0	CY	0,0
BA	0	BA	0,0
MK	0	MK	0,0

Table 9: Problems LPCs have experienced in participating in joint transnational calls of the ERA-NET

PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY LPCs in JTCs	
Inability to secure funds	11
Few project proposals with research partners from LPCs	11
Inability to use funds due to lower ranking of projects with partners from LPCs in ranking list	7
Minor roles of LPC researchers participating in selected projects	2
No major problem of LPCs observed	3
Lack of flexibility in national rules	1
Contracting problems	1

Table 10: Problems experienced in JTCs by country

	EE	HU	LV	LT	LU	PL	PT	RO	SK	SI	RS	TR	Σ
Researchers assumed only minor roles in selected projects			1	1									**2**
LPCs unable to use funds due to lower ranking of projects	1	1	3	1	1		2	2	1	2	1	2	**17**
LPCs whose research partners only participated in few proposals	1	2	6	2	1	1		1		3	1	2	**20**
LPCs with problems securing funds to participate in the JTC	3	2	2	2			2			1		1	**13**
Σ	**5**	**5**	**12**	**6**	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**6**	**2**	**5**	

Eight ERA-NETs report on inclusiveness mechanisms encouraging the participation of partners from LPCs in the call (e.g. particular attention given to the inclusion LPC researchers in research consortia underlined in the call text). Measures include:
- *asking the LPCs in advance about their priorities;*
- *offering joint participation in partnering events and trade fairs (especially when innovative SMEs are a target);*
- *giving calls a regional focus and funding also non-EU countries (e.g. from the Mediterranean region)*
- *offering partnering tools to researchers to search for collaborators (not directed explicitly to LPCs, but many times it is an effective measure to foster new collaborations from LPCs);*
- *balancing the consortia when it comes to country participation both in terms of number of partners and distribution of budget (with each partner's budget typical for the respective national project volume);*
- *encouraging the inclusion of LPCs in full proposals (if LPCs are at risk of not being able to fund at least 1 project with funds available equal to or below requested funds in the pre-proposal stage, proposals are invited to add a partner from LPCs in the full proposal stage); feedback from project coordinators who have done so has been very positive;*
- *using a "wild card" system for proposals evaluated as satisfactory by the expert panel (in case a funding organisation was significantly undersubscribed after the pre-proposal stage it could invite one pre-proposal to pass on to the full proposal stage).*

4. Survey for National Contact Points / Project Committee Members / SCAR delegates

The survey was completed by NCPs, PC members and SCAR delegates from 2 associated countries and 13 member states as summarized in Table 10 bellow. As can be observed from the table, 21 officials responded to the survey, 17 as SC2 NCP, 8 in as SC2 PC member and two as SCAR delegates. 1 respondent is the Coordinator of Policy and Socio-Economic Research.

Table 11: LPC officials responding to survey on LPC ERA-NET participation

LPC	NAME	FUNCTION
BA	Katarina Bosnjakovic	NCP
BG	Bojin Bojinov	NCP
BG	Teodor Vassilev	NCP
HR	Marina Jurjevic	NCP, PC
CY	Georgia Kleanthous	NCP
CZ	Nada Konickova	NCP
EE	Argo Soon	NCP, PC
EE	Külli Kaare	SCAR
HU	Agnes Ratzne Ludanyi	NCP
LV	Linda Kluga	NCP, PC
LT	Jurgita Stonyte	NCP(alternative)
MT	Elena Ysnetskaya	NCP
MT	Allanah Bonnici	NCP
PL	Monika Rzepecka	PC, SCAR
PL	Bożena Podlaska	NCP, PC
PT	Maria João Fernandes	NCP, PC
SK	Natasa Hurtova	NCP
SI	Marta Šabec	NCP, PC
TR	Mehmet Kilci	Coordinator of Policy and Socio-Economic Research
TR	Çinar Öner	NCP, PC

According to the survey the respondents are well acquainted with the ERA-NET instrument, as summarised in Figure 1, with 62% answering they are well or very well acquainted with the instrument.

Figure 1: Acquaintance with the ERA-NET instrument
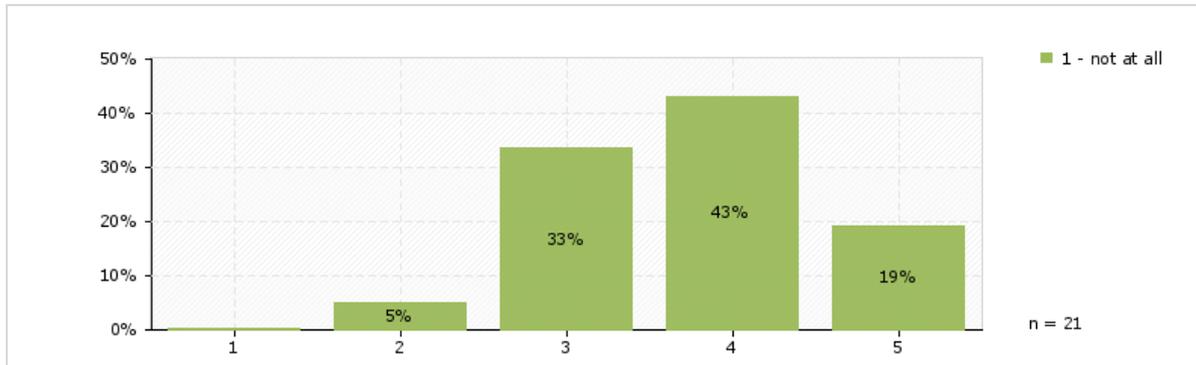
*How well are you acquainted with the ERA-NET instrument?*

The respondents quite often provide information on ERA-NETs to relevant stakeholders as summarised in Figure 2, with 43% answering they provide information on ERA-NETs to stakeholders often or very often. However, respondents are much less frequently approached by the stakeholders themselves, with 24% of respondents answering they are never or rarely approached by stakeholders requesting information on ERA-NETs.

Figure 2: Frequency of providing information on ERA-NETs
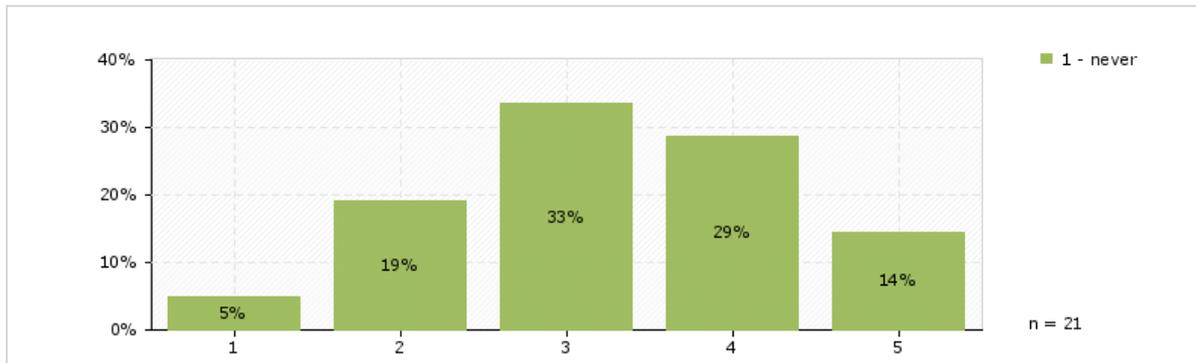
How often have you provided information on ERA-NET projects to relevant stakeholders (e.g. national funding institutions)?

Figure 3: Frequency of requests for information on ERA-NETs
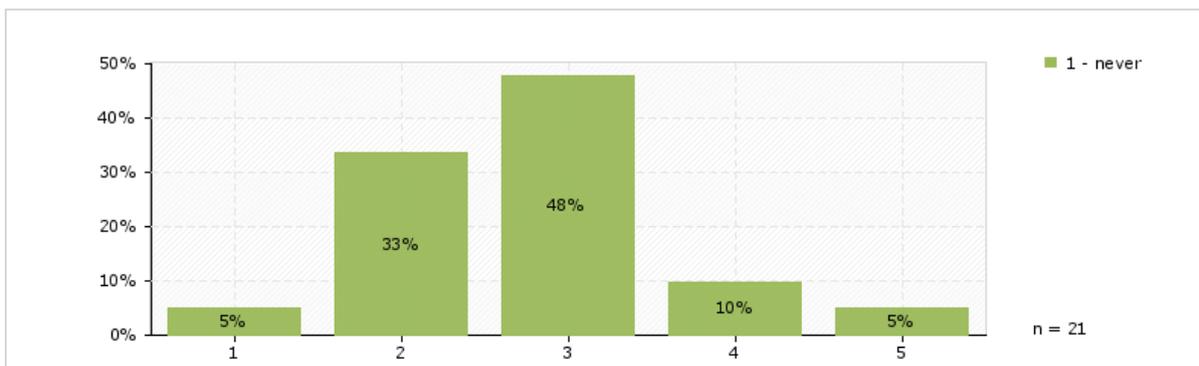
How often was information on ERA-NETs requested from relevant stakeholders?

As one respondent pointed out ERA-NETs are an interesting mechanism for national stakeholders and present an intermediary step between national and big transnational European projects. PLATFORM asked the respondents to further identify the reasons an organization becomes a partner in an ERA-NET initiative.

The two main reasons for joining an ERA-NET identified were a) an invitation to the organisation to join a consortium and b) seeing potential in developing the research community in the field. Apart from other reasons, as summarised in Figure 4, suggestions by PC members / SCAR delegates to join an ERA-NET, available national budget for funding research in the field and inclusion of the theme in the national Smart Specialization strategy where also among the reasons for joining an ERA-NET.

The main obstacle to successful participation are still:
a)   *a lack of national funding*
b)   *administrative burdens*
c)   *missing strategies regarding public-public partnerships and initiatives, such as ERA-NETs*

The latter leads to an absence of a systematic approach, a lack of coordination among national funding organisations and unclear national priorities and/or criteria for participation in ERA-NETs. Additionally, project participants from LPCs often have insufficient/little/no experience with ERA-NETs, with active participation (as WP or task leader) in an ERA-NET consortium being hindered by a lack of time of the scarce staff managing international research cooperation in many LPC countries.

Figure 4: Reasons of joining an ERA-NET
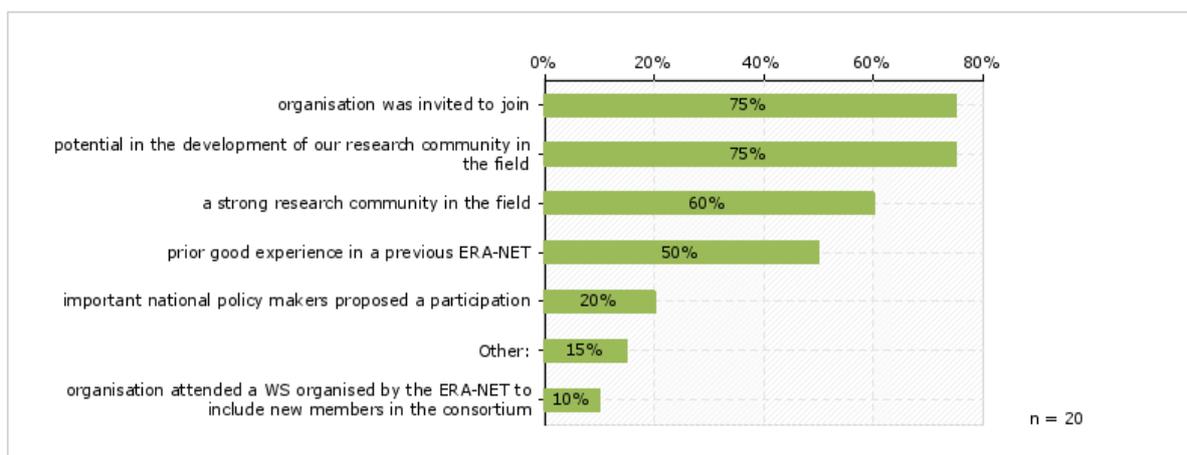
What are the main reasons for your national organizations to join an ERA-NET consortium?

PLATFORM was also interested in the reasons for assuming an active role in an ERA-NET and the barriers to being a more active member of the consortium. Figure 5 summarizes the reasons for active participation, the most important one being the experience with the task at hand. Additional reasons state available personnel for the task at hand.

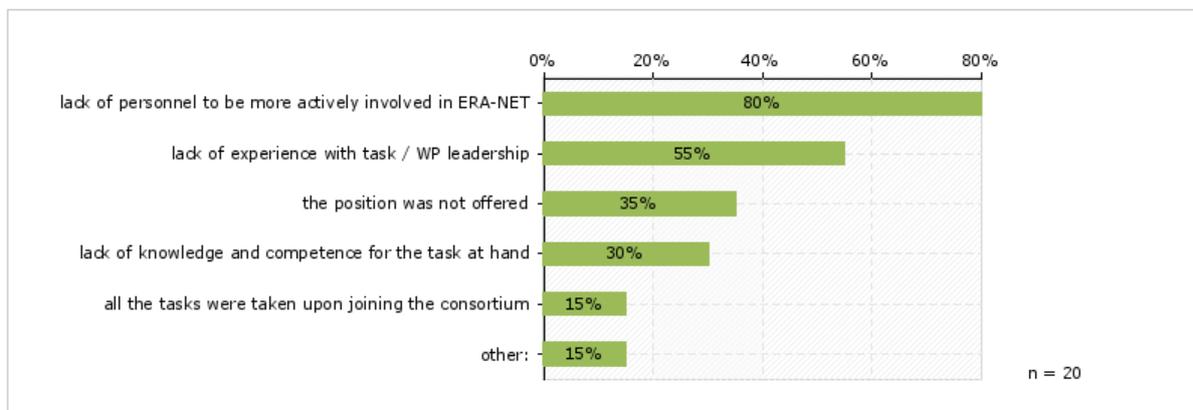Figure 5: Reasons for active participation
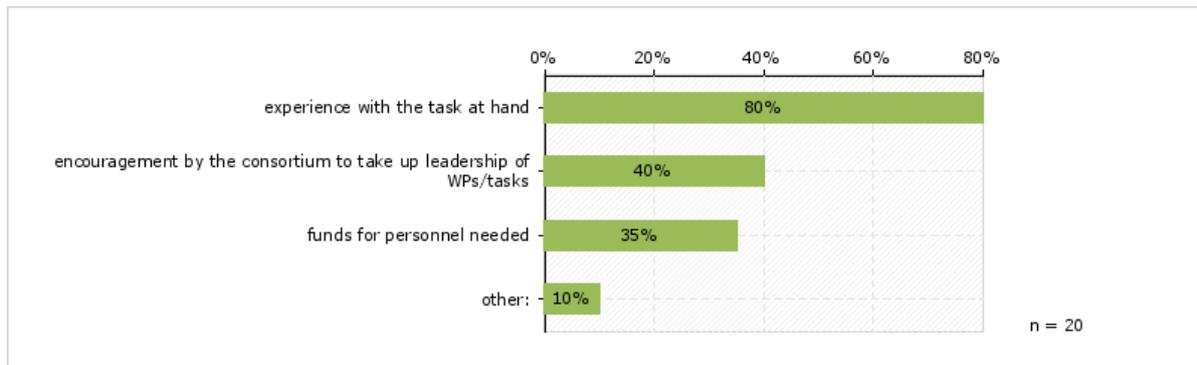
In your opinion, what are the main reasons for active participation of LPCs in ERA-NETs (as WP/task leaders)?

When it comes to the lack of active participation the lack of personnel is the main reason for inactivity, with 80% of the respondents identifying the problem. The lack of experience with the task at hand or WP leadership is also considered an important barrier, with 55% of the respondents identifying the issue.
Other reasons for inactivity in addition to those identified in Figure 6 include the lack of budget committed for the task at hand, insufficient national funding and the absence of a national strategy, agenda and methodology to participate in ERA-NETs. The latter two reasons could be considered as important barriers that actually prevent many organizations from participating in ERA-NETs.

Figure 6: Reason for inactivity in ERA-NETs

In your opinion, what are the main reasons for the lack of active participation of LPCs in ERA-NETs (as WP/task leaders?

PLATFORM asked the NCPs / PC members and SCAR delegates what measures they propose to the coordinator of an ERA-NET or an ERA-NET consortium to increase participation of LPCs in ERA-NETs. Interestingly some partners observed this is not the role of the coordinator or the consortium and special funds should be provided for such activities. Nonetheless the respondents have provided many ideas, which we group in 4 broad groups:

1) Communication
   - *improve communication with the funding organizations from LPCs, by increasing the intensity and number of direct contacts*
   - *ensure that all relevant institutions in LPCs are contacted early in the process (as internal procedures in many LPCs take a very long time, creating difficulties for participation)*
   - *promote potential benefits of participation in the ERA-NETs to different stakeholders (especially policy makers)*
   - *actively communicate with relevant program owners (national funding organizations) underlining achieved results in ERA-NETs and sharing best practices*
   - develop a communication mechanism on PLATFORM level involving all members of LPCs in inclusiveness activities of different ERA-NETs

2) Capacity building
   - *provide program managers from LPCs with training and guidance on how to get actively involved in bioeconomy related collaboration actions*
   - *perform capacity building activities (e.g. development of competences for WP / task leadership roles)*
   - *organize workshops, e.g. for the exchange of best practices resulting from participation in order to overcame the barriers of the national R&D management system*
   - *create a mentoring program*

3) Involvement
   - *invite the organizations to join the consortium early, not as last minute additions, which is many times the reason for the lack of more active involvement*
   - *proactively give LPC members in WP/task leadership responsibilities, thus giving the LPC partner more importance in the consortium*
   - *increase the number of experts from LPCs that are involved in the ERA-NET (Strategic Advisory Board, Scientific Evaluation Board)*
   - *inviting funding agencies from not-participating countries as potential partners to observe ERA-NET activities and allowing them to join the consortium at a later stage (possibly by securing enough funding for their participation*

4) Relevance
   - *ensure that ERA-NET calls will include research topics that are also relevant to LPCs (maybe including more basic research too)*
   - *take into consideration the smart specialization strategies of LPCs*

Respondents were also asked to identify the main obstacles to successful Joint Transactional Call participation of LPCs. The inability to secure funds and not having enough project applications that would include research partners from a given LPC are identified as the main obstacles, both identified by 58% of the respondents. In addition to those summarized in Figure 7, respondents identified a lack of human resources and problems with remunerations as additional obstacles.

Figure 7: Obstacles to successful JTC participation
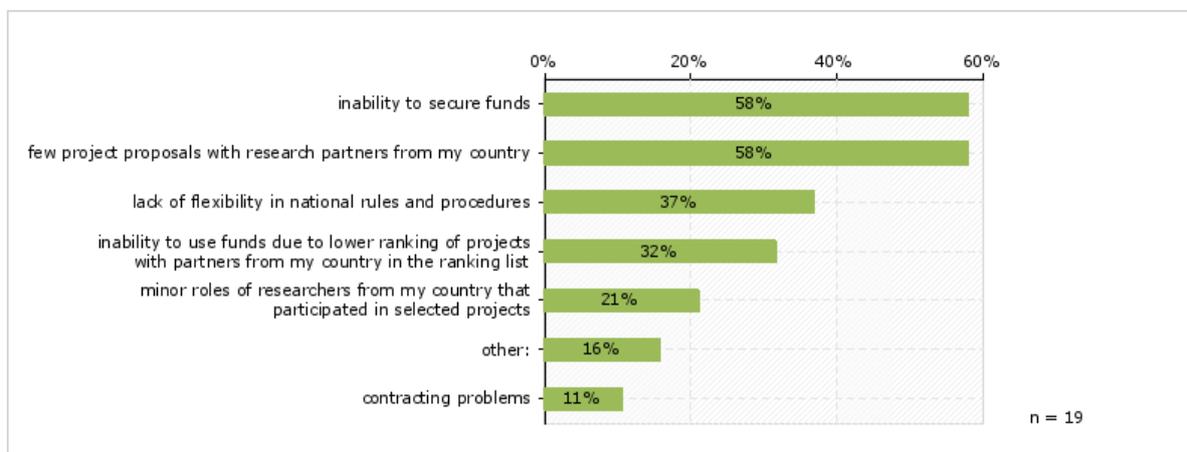
In your opinion what are the main obstacles for successful joint transnational call participation of LPCs?

Due to the identified obstacles the great majority (95%) of the respondents would very much like to see ERA-NETs include »inclusiveness mechanisms« that would encourage the participation of researchers from LPCs in JTCs. Such mechanisms could include:

- *emphasizing the geographical dimensions in the call text and including an evaluation criterion on it (in terms of specific requirement to consortium composition, e.g. by making the participation of at least one researcher from a LPC participating in the JTC in a project a prerequisite for funding; giving bonus points in the evaluation process to projects which ensure LPC participation in which partners from LPCs assume project coordinator roles)*
- *including mobility schemes for LPCs as an evaluation criterion in the case of equal scores (similar to gender or SME inclusion elements in H2020)*
- *launching targeted call for proposals*
- *increasing personal engagement and organizing special meetings sharing personal experience of experienced partners with newcomers on the encountered difficulties and implemented best practices (e.g. new mechanisms at national level)*
- *Providing a special budget for the organization of the meetings in LPCs to encourage the participation of researchers in the call and also to achieve bigger acknowledgement of ERA-NETs at the political level*
- *inviting funding agencies from not-participating countries to observe the JTC activities*
- *allowing LPC partners to join research consortia at a later stage (i.e. after the pre-proposal stage)*
- *adjusting the rate of EC cofunding according to country status, giving provisions to LPC partners from the EC contributions to co-funded call*
- *providing for more flexibility in procedures deciding the budget and its availability*

One respondent pointed out that the discussion about the possibilities requires taking into account legal provisions and procedures of EC, while another stated that an inclusiveness policy responsive to the needs and assets of diverse cultures in the European Union is needed, with H2020 operations and programs being more attuned to the needs and resources of LPCs.

In their concluding remarks the respondents noted that in general research teams have good experience participating in ERA-NET activities and calls. But there should be much more information sharing and discussion on EU policy and management level emphasizing the importance of ERA-NETs, encouraging the participation in ERA-NET cofounds as well as encouraging the allocation of more national funds on country level. However, due to a large number of ERA-NETs, it is also important for each LPC to set its priorities and participate in those ERA-NETs and JTCs that are relevant, as to aggregate rather than diffuse funding.

## 5. Survey for LPC representatives in bioeconomy ERA-NETs

The survey was completed by 16 respondents from 9 countries (5 from Latvia, 3 from Portugal, 2 from Slovenia, 1 from Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, FYR Macedonia, Croatia and Romania) as summarized in Table 11. The respondents have experience in over 40 ERA-NET, ERA-NET Plus and ERA-NET Cofund initiatives.

Table 12: Respondents to LPC representatives

| LPC	Name	Organisation
BA	Mersudin Avdibegović	Faculty of Forestry University of Sarajevo
BG	Anna Aladjadjiyan	National Biomass Association
CY	Vassilis Vassiliou	Agricultural Research Institute
HR	Tomislav Radić	Institute for Adriatic Crops and Karst Reclamation
LT	Nerijus Kupstaitis	Ministry of Environment
LV	Egils Stalidzans	Latvia University of Agriculture
LV	Baiba Rivza	Latvian Academy of Agriculture and Forestry sciences
LV	Dace Tirzite	Latvian Academy of Sciences
LV	Uldis Berkis	VIAA/LAS
MK	Kiril Sotirovski	Faculty of Forestry - Skopje, University Ss Cyril and Methodius
PT	Marta Norton	FCT
PT	Maria Maia	Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
PT	Leonor Cruz	Instituto Nacional de Investigação Agrária e Veterinária
RO	Adrian Asanica	UEFISCDI
SI	Kim Turk	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
SI	Luka Zivic	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

The majority of respondents (82%) indicated that their organization joined an ERA-NET consortium because they saw potential in developing their research community in the field. An important reason for joining was also an invitation to join the consortium (71%). Other reasons are identified in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Reasons for joining the ERA-NET consortium
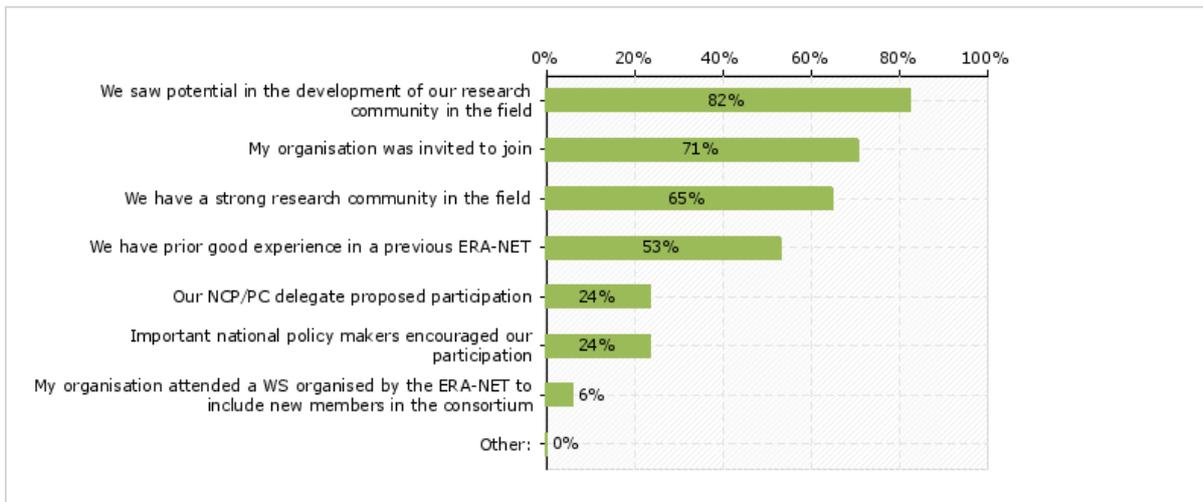
Many of the respondents were active partners in the ERA-NET initiatives they participated in (59%), and often participated in joint calls (53%). While task leadership is not uncommon (47%), only 35% of the respondents have assumed WP leadership roles. More partners joined an ERA-NET in its continuation than left it. The reasons for leaving an ERA-NET included lack of results in the JTCs, an applied focus and a need to prioritize ERA-NET participation due to a lack of personnel.

Figure 9: Tasks assumed in an ERA-NET
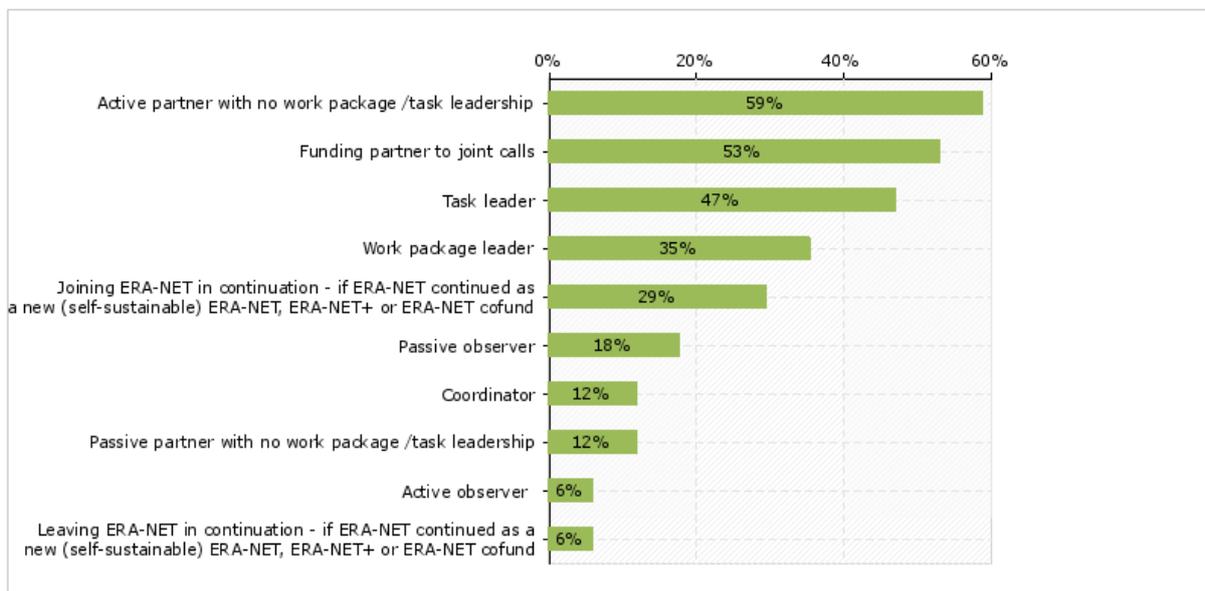
A lack of personnel was also the main reason for not assuming a more active role in an ERA-NET (70%), with a lack of experience with task / WP leadership and the fact that the position was not offered following as other important reasons (identified by 50% and 40% of respondents). In one case a task was taken up, but given away due to time constraints and the lack of knowledge to perform the envisioned activities.

Figure 10: Reasons for not assuming a more active role
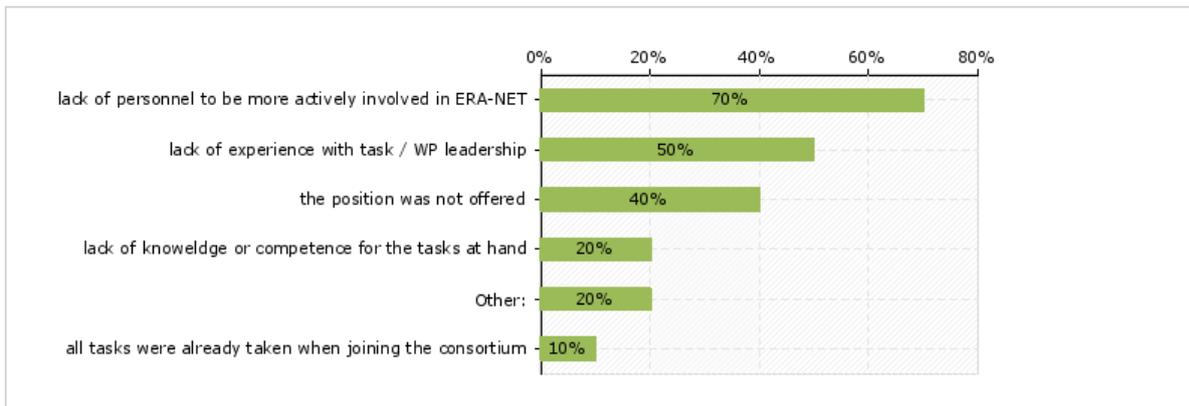
It is the experience that plays the most important role in assuming a task, as identified by 67% of respondents. Other reasons, as can be seen in Figure 11 are equally important.

Figure 11: Reasons for assuming an active role in an ERA-NET
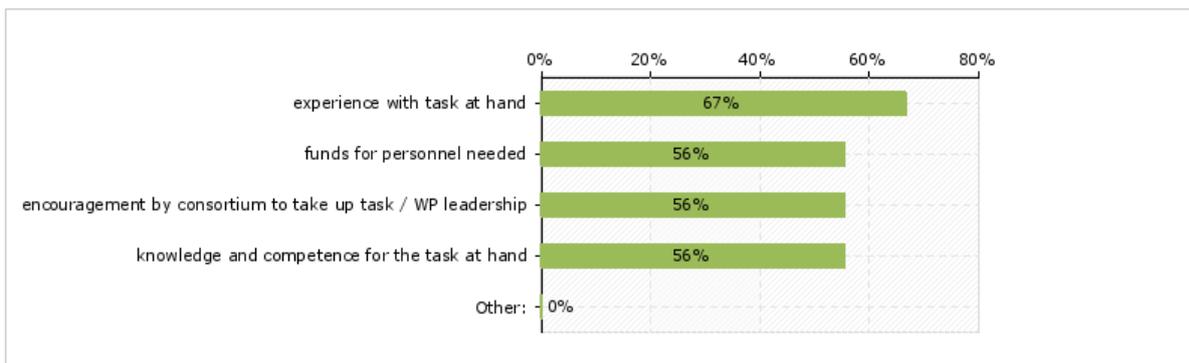
When it comes to joint call participation, 67% of the respondents deem their budget high enough to fund the proposals recommended for funding, while 33% found their national budget too low (oversubscription occurred). Even if none of the respondents identified undersubscription as a problem, 67% claim they were unable to use their funds due to a lower ranking of the projects with national partners. Indeed this was identified as the major obstacle to successful JTC participation. Other problems related to JTC participation are identified in Figure 12, with one respondent also identifying the amount of funding being too low for the amount of strong proposals received.

Figure 12: Major problems related to JTC participation
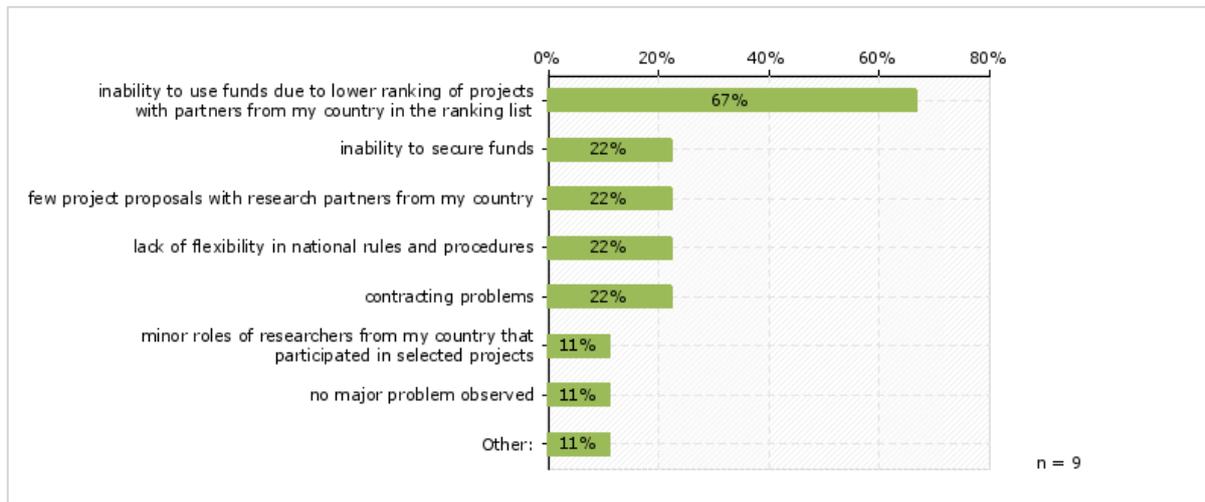
33% of the respondents report that the ERA-NET they participated in included an inclusiveness mechanism encouraging partners from LPCs to participate in the call.

- *The main mechanism takes the form of a provision in the JTC regarding the encouragement of consortiums to include under-performing countries in the consortium. However as observed by one respondent the impact of the provision is normally not measured.*
- *Another non-competitive option for encouraging LPCs participation in the call includes allowing participation with in-kind contribution.*
- *When it comes to proposal evaluation, preference to those proposals that include LPCs (when two proposals are equally scored) is sometimes be given.*
- *Additionally, already set-up consortia can be encouraged to join an open partner search platform for LPCs to join them, potentially also in the 2nd stage of the evaluation.*

Regarding other measures the ERA-NET coordinator or the ERA-NET consortium could take to increase the participation of LPCs in ERA-NET initiatives, respondents identified the following measures:

- *increasing the efforts to disseminate information on ERA-NETs in LPCs, also by organizing face-to-face meetings and info sessions in respective LPCs countries*
- *approaching LPC representatives in a more friendly way and treating them as an equal partner once they join the consortium (some partners especially in high-level positions still neglect the participants from LPC countries)*
- *formally inviting LPCs to participate by targeting high level LPC officials (expressed 6 times)*
- *organizing an event for high-level officials from LPCs with the goal to raise awareness of ERA-NET initiatives*
- *providing a platform for networking that could organize dedicated meetings for increasing collaboration between LPC and non-LPC research institutions / academia within calls*
- *understanding and being sensitive towards the difficulties LPCs experience and providing additional support to LPCs regarding administration issues*
- *devoting one WP on inclusiveness in each ERA-NET, giving leadership to a LPC*
- *giving more WP leadership roles to LPCs*
- *having a specific budget, a "sub-fund" within the ERA-NET for LPCs to enable more active participation or to motivate participation in the first place, e.g. by inviting LPCs as observers to attend meetings and covering the costs.*

To conclude this report we are summarizing some final thoughts of the LPC representatives:

- *The research community in LPCs has a lot of interest to be involved in the European research area but many times the observer status prevents LPCs from a more active participation and better use of the possibilities ERA-NETs have to offer.*
- *Administrative and specific national financial issues/rules/aspects continue to have a deterring role for participation (e.g. when participating in JTCs, cases with financial consequences to participant researchers have been recorded due to illogical administrative/fiscal rules within some LPC national systems). Furthermore, it needs to be acknowledged that some ERA-NETs run smoothly and have easy-to-follow rules, while others are less effective in terms of management and implementation. Different geometries of funding and partnerships make thematic ERA-NETs difficult to understand by LPCs with limited experience and knowledge in the field.*
- *By those being part of the ERA-NET world, participation is viewed mainly as a positive experience. Promoting transnational collaboration, contributing to finding solutions of important socio-economic issues, helping overcome the fragmentation of resources, ERA-NETs can be considered as a "smart approach in research policy".*
- *ERA-NET are a good instrument also because they allow LPC researchers to participate with their own national funding under specific national rules which do not influence other partners. This provides them with an opportunity to be taken on board in consortia led by high-performing institutions from the well-performing countries and to find new opportunities to improve and expand the research performed (many times with sectoral impact). It is a very good and inclusive experience, allowing for the integration of LPCs in EU research networks.*
- *However, it does not always prove to be successful and sustainable when it comes to other EU initiatives (e.g. in Framework program calls). Despite an increased willingness of the main players to bring LPCs aboard, the issue of collaboration cluster formation, which seldom include LPCs, is a problem not only in FP calls but increasingly also in ERA-NETs.*
- *Despite the positive experience participating LPCs have, some respondents acknowledge ERA-NETs are still not very recognized as an instrument at national level. This results in a lack of long-term planning in joining ERA-NET initiatives, which could at least partially be solved by improving the links between ERA-NET project managers and the respective PC members and thus optimizing information flow.*

Annex 1: Survey for ERA-NET coordinators

Q1 - ERA-NET acronym. Please name the ERA-NET you are providing answers for. If you have coordinated / are responding for more than one ERA-NET (including ERA-NET continuation), PLEASE RESPOND FOR EACH ERA-NET SEPARATELY.

Q2 - Respondent information. Please provide your information:- name with organization affiliation (line 1)- current contact details, including email and phone number (line 2)- role in ERA-NET you are providing information for (line 3).

Q3 - LPCs participating in ERA-NET. Please provide information on the LPCs participating in the ERA-NET you are responding for. Multiple answers are possible.

- ☐ Bulgaria
- ☐ Croatia
- ☐ Cyprus
- ☐ Czech Republic
- ☐ Estonia
- ☐ Hungary
- ☐ Latvia
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Luxemburg
- ☐ Malta
- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Portugal
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Slovakia
- ☐ Slovenia
- ☐ Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ☐ FYR Macedonia
- ☐ Serbia
- ☐ Turkey
- ☐ Ukraine
- ☐ Other:

Q4- Please chose LPC's role in ERA-NET (for each LPC from Q3). Multiple answers are possible.

- ☐ WP leader
- ☐ Task leader
- ☐ Active partner
- ☐ Passive partner
- ☐ Active observer
- ☐ Passive observer
- ☐ Joining ERA-NET in continuation - if ERA-NET Dcontinued as a new (self-sustainable) ERA-NET, ERA-NET+ or ERA-NET cofund
- ☐ Leaving ERA-NET in continuation - if ERA-NET continued as a new (self-sustainable) ERA-NET, ERA-NET+ or ERA-NET cofund

Q5 - Reasons for discontinuation

Q6 - LPCs participating in ERA-NET Joint Transnational Calls (JTCs). Please indicate which LPCs participated in the ERA-NET JTCs. Multiple answers are possible.

☐ Bulgaria
☐ Croatia
☐ Cyprus
☐ Czech Republic
☐ Estonia
☐ Hungary
☐ Latvia
☐ Lithuania
☐ Luxemburg
☐ Malta
☐ Poland
☐ Portugal
☐ Romania
☐ Slovakia
☐ Slovenia
☐ Bosnia and Herzegovina
☐ FYR Macedonia
☐ Serbia
☐ Turkey
☐ Ukraine
☐ Other:

Q7 - Please indicate the total number of joint transnational calls the ERA-NET (has) published.

Q8 - Please indicate the number of joint transnational calls other country participated in.

Q9 - Please indicate the number of funded projects for the country.

Q10 - Please indicate major problems LPCs have experienced in participating in joint transnational calls of the ERA-NET. Multiple answers are possible

☐ Inability to secure funds
☐ Few project proposals with research partners from LPCs
☐ Inability to use funds due to lower ranking of projects with partners from LPCs in ranking list
☐ Minor roles of LPC researchers participating in selected projects
☐ No major problem of LPCs observed
☐ Other:

Q11 - Please list LPCs whose researchers assumed only minor roles in selected projects.

Q12 - Please list LPCs unable to use their funds due to lower ranking of projects.

Q13 - Please list LPCs whose research partners only participated in few proposals.

Q14 Please list LPCs which had problems securing funds to participate in the call.

Q15 - Please list LPCs which didn't experience major problems with call participation.

Q16 - Have you included any "inclusiveness mechanisms" encouraging the participation of partners from LPCs in the call (e.g. particular attention to LPC researchers' inclusion in research consortia underlined in the call text)? Example taken from the TRANSCAN JTC 2014: "In order to strengthen the European translational cancer research area, a wide inclusion of research team from all the countries/regions participating in the call is encouraged, with a particular attention to research teams from Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey."

○ yes
○ no

Q17 - Please describe the measures taken to encourage participation of researchers from LPCs in the call

Q18 - Did the ERA-NET perform any activities to include LPCs or increase LPCs participation in the ERA-NET consortium? (e.g. invitation to consortium in project preparation phase, dedicated task for inclusion of LPCs in ERA-NET continuation, ...)

○ yes
○ no

Q19- Was the activity successful?

○ yes
○ no

Q20 - Please describe the activity and potential reasons for its unsuccessful outcome.

Q21 - Please describe the activity and its successful outcome.

Q22- Please provide any additional comments you might have regarding LPCs' participation in ERA-NETs (and its JTCs). e.g. good/bad practices, positive/negative experience with LPCs's participation in ERA-NET you are responding for or other ERA-NETs you have participated in

Annex 2: Survey for LPC NCP / PC / SCAR members

Q1 - Respondent information. Name (line 1)Country (line 2)Position (NCP, PC, SCAR member) (line 3)Current contact details, including email and phone number (line 4)

Q2 - How well are you acquainted with the ERA-NET instrument*? *including ERA-NET, ERA-NET+ and ERA-NET COFUND

	1	2	3	4	5	
1 - not at all	○	○	○	○	○	5 - very well

Q3 - How often have you provided information on ERA-NET projects to relevant stakeholders (e.g. national funding institutions) ?

	1	2	3	4	5	
1 - never	○	○	○	○	○	5 - very often

Q4 - How often was information on ERA-NETs requested from relevant stakeholders?

	1	2	3	4	5	
1 - never	○	○	○	○	○	5 - very often

Q5 - In your opinion, what are the main reasons for your national organisations to join an ERA-NET consortium? Multiple answers are possible.

☐ prior good experience in a previous ERA-NET
☐ organisation was invited to join
☐ organisation attended a WS organised by the ERA-NET to include new members in the consortium
☐ a strong research community in the field
☐ potential in the development of our research community in the field
☐ important national policy makers proposed a participation
☐ Other:

Q6 - In your opinion, what are the main reasons for active participation of LPCs in ERA-NETs (as WP/task leaders)? Multiple answers are possible.

☐ funds for personnel needed
☐ experience with the task at hand
☐ encouragement by the consortium to take up leadership of WPs/tasks
☐ other:

Q7 - In your opinion, what are the main reasons for the lack of active participation of LPCs in ERA-NETs (as WP/task leaders)? Multiple answers are possible.

☐ the position was not offered
☐ all the tasks were taken upon joining the consortium
☐ lack of experience with task / WP leadership
☐ lack of knowledge and competence for the task at hand
☐ lack of personnel to be more actively involved in ERA-NET
☐ other:

Q8 - In your opinion what measures could the coordinator of an ERA-NET or ERA-NET consortium take to increase the participation of LPCs in ERA-NET?

Q9 - In your opinion what are the main obstacles for successful joint transnational call participation of LPCs?
Multiple answers are possible.

☐ inability to secure funds
☐ few project proposals with research partners from my country
☐ inability to use funds due to lower ranking of projects with partners from my country in the ranking list
☐ minor roles of researchers from my country that participated in selected projects
☐ lack of flexibility in national rules and procedures
☐ contracting problems
☐ other:

Q10 - In your opinion should the ERA-NETs include an "inclusiveness mechanisms" encouraging the participation of partners from LPCs in the joint transnational call?

◯ yes
◯ no

Q11 - Please provide reasons why not

Q12 - Please provide examples of such a mechanism

Q13 - Please provide any additional comments you might have regarding the participation of your country in ERA-NETs. e.g. good/bad practices, positive/negative experience with ERA-NETs projects.

Annex 3: Survey for ERA-NET participants from LPCs

Q1 - Respondent information. Your name (line 1)-   Name of the organization you are representing (line 2)-   Country (line 3)-   Current contact details, including email and phone number (line 4)

Q2 - Please list the number of ERA-NET initiatives (ERA-NET, ERA-NET + and ERA-NET cofund) your organisation has participated in.

Q3 - Please list the ERA-NET initiatives (ERA-NET, ERA-NET + and ERA-NET cofund) you have participated in.

Q4 - Please indicate the reasons for joining the ERA-NET consortium.
Multiple answers are possible as you are answering for multiple ERA-NET initiatives.

☐ We have prior good experience in a previous ERA-NET
☐ My organisation was invited to join
☐ My organisation attended a WS organised by the ERA-NET to include new members in the consortium
☐ We have a strong research community in the field
☐ We saw potential in the development of our research community in the field
☐ Our NCP/PC delegate proposed participation
☐ Important national policy makers encouraged our participation
☐ Other:

Q5 - What was the role your organisation assumed in ERA-NET initiatives you participated in. Multiple answers are possible as you are answering for multiple ERA-NET initiatives.

☐ Coordinator
☐ Work package leader
☐ Task leader
☐ Funding partner to joint calls
☐ Active partner with no work package /task leadership
☐ Passive partner with no work package /task leadership
☐ Active observer
☐ Passive observer
☐ Joining ERA-NET in continuation - if ERA-NET continued as a new (self-sustainable) ERA-NET, ERA-NET+ or ERA-NET cofund
☐ Leaving ERA-NET in continuation - if ERA-NET continued as a new (self-sustainable) ERA-NET, ERA-NET+ or ERA-NET cofund

Q6 - Reason for discontinuation

Q7 - Why was a more active role (as WP/ task leader) in the ERA-NET not assumed? Multiple answers are possible as you are answering for multiple ERA-NET initiatives.

☐ the position was not offered
☐ all tasks were already taken when joining the consortium
☐ lack of experience with task / WP leadership
☐ lack of knowledge or competence for the tasks at hand
☐ lack of personnel to be more actively involved in ERA-NET
☐ Other:

Q8 - Why was a more active role (as WP/ task leader) in the ERA-NET assumed? Multiple answers are possible as you are answering for multiple ERA-NET initiatives.

☐ funds for personnel needed
☐ experience with task at hand
☐ encouragement by consortium to take up task / WP leadership
☐ knowledge and competence for the task at hand
☐ Other:

Q9- Please provide contact details (email, phone).

Q10 - Please indicate the number of joint transnational calls (JTCs) your organization has participated in.

Q11 - Please specify the number of projects your organisation funded through the joint transnational calls you participated in.

Q12 - Was the budget your organisation designated for projects funded through JTCs normally:

◯ High enough to fund the proposals recommended for funding with your national partners
◯ Too low for the number of proposals recommended for funding with your national partners (you were oversubscribed)
◯ Too high for the number of proposals recommended for funding with your national partners (you were undersubscribed)

Q13 - Please indicate the major problems you have experienced when participating in JTCs. Multiple answers are possible as you are responding for multiple JTCs.

☐ inability to secure funds
☐ few project proposals with research partners from my country
☐ inability to use funds due to lower ranking of projects with partners from my country in the ranking list
☐ minor roles of researchers from my country that participated in selected projects
☐ lack of flexibility in national rules and procedures
☐ contracting problems
☐ no major problem observed
☐ Other:

Q14- Have the ERA-NETs you participated in included any "inclusiveness mechanisms" encouraging the participation of partners from LPCs in the call? e.g. particular attention given to LPC researchers' inclusion in research consortia underlined in the call text; in the case of undersubscription option of adding LPC researchers in the full proposal stage.

◯ yes
◯ no

Q15 - Please elaborate on the inclusiveness mechanism.

Q16 - In your opinion what measures could the ERA-NET coordinator or the ERA-NET consortium take to increase the participation of LPCs in ERA-NET initiatives? e.g. provide extra support with administration issues, send invitations for ERA-NET participation to high-level officials, organise face-to-face meetings in your respective countries, etc.

Q17- Please provide any additional comments you might have regarding your participation in ERA-NET initiatives. e.g. good/bad practices, positive/negative experience in ERA-NETs you are responding for