

**Some lessons and observations from the
Peer Review of the Bulgarian
Research & Innovation System.**

Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility

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about the PSF,

- PSF is a process and team work; it is not just about a peer review
- The PSF exercise is based upon an independent and internationally comprise Panel of researchers, practitioners and experts
- Who asked for the PSF should trust the Panel and EC services; one should be confident in the results that will get at the end!
- PSF is transparent and open to the world and ... flexible. What does it mean?

context,

- It is very important to be defined and well described the real political and social environment in the country and within the sector right from the beginning
- Reasons:
 - The PSF is conducted in a very limited time so that the Panel should “dive” immediately into the content – not only into the matter/problem itself/legislation/etc. but as expectations from the government/ministries/agencies involved and most important of the leaders and experts involved
- For example: what is the level of ambition; what the government wants to change; where or on what the involved managers think they won't succeed or will have difficulties, etc.
 - It's is useful an independent local/national observer, i.e. expert and/or individual/s to be involved from the beginning into the PSF

content,

- The main outcomes were not new and “juicy” for the main stakeholders which had both positive and negative side:
 - A) for the government and the political management it was confirmation based on serious evidence and analyses that the statue-quo should change;
 - The PSF equipped them with flexible and independent tool to move in direction they envisaged earlier (to some extend)
 - B) for researchers and universities and research organizations’ managers the conclusions push them back into their “usual business” and it is still a challenge for the government to make them active in enhancing/accepting the outcomes as a common challenge for the country
- Measures:
 - Early involvement of key stakeholders ‘representatives into the PSF exercise
 - Media involvement – interviews with the PSF Panel and the EC but also from national stakeholders
 - Facebook or devoted website with platform or twitter – social and communication tool for showing and sharing case studies and opinions

timing,

- 6-8 months – is it enough?
- It is necessary to be very clear from the launching of the PSF how many events and visits are planned/expected/necessary and WHEN
 - For example: tenders for venues/catering or not available venues; external people to be hired, etc.
- Politicians, key stakeholders and moderators (if) to be “booked” early in advance
- Enough “time” for feedback on the PSF outcome – inner circle among the managers and experts involved
- Don’t forget translations of documents also takes time and there are always some holidays 😊

resources,

- Every MS has its own case but there is always lack of enough experts within administrations who can be involved or are devoted to work on every-day basis in international environment
- The PSF exercise creates additional work so the managers involved should envisage additional workload and perhaps some stimulus for encouragement
- Administration should feel that is contributing also – its very important to be avoided eventual feeling of undervaluation of capabilities and knowledge
- Good practice – Sounding board involving EC and beneficiary organization – up to 3-4 people
- Suggestion – Sounding board “at home” too ... on early stage

coordination,

- PSF contact point – gathering materials, information, legislation on request of the Panel, every-day communication with the EC, involving in events planning, in-house coordination of availability of stakeholders, clarifications, etc.
- On practice it's better to have one contact person responsible for all the logistic and a leading expert responsible for providing data as well as clarifications on time
- Another resources should be devoted to the events with stakeholders and one person coordinating the engagement of high-level officials or important key stakeholders
- Manager/s has/ve the responsibility of monitoring the ongoing work – at the end it's a political decision and it is about responsibility
 - Good practice –PSF liaison in Brussels – participation in Panel meetings (video-conferences), supporting on-time communication and every-day contact with RTD, EC

information channels

- Online survey – questionnaire to support the evidence-base. It also orientates the Panel members on the ongoing worries and/or believes of the main stakeholders what is important, etc. It is anonymous and flexible and relatively short
- During events its important to be picked up different conclusions or suggestions from the survey so that the stakeholders to feel as part of the Peer Review
- Devoted website, Facebook page or section on the main website of the beneficiary institutions
- Collaboration with other platforms, media or association website for publication and raising awareness

and after the PSF,

- Post PSF “fatigues” – one should assure continues process and engagement of the administration and of the politicians!
- Identify before the end of the PSF who will be responsible to draw action plan or next steps
- Invest in further coordination with main stakeholders
- Involve media expert to advice on continuous publications and “picking up” interesting findings
- Assure transparency – the PSF results will be published on the EC website – mirror this action back home!
- Create dialogue with citizens – the Sounding board could play a role into it
- Keep on good exchange and communication with the EC

Good luck!

For some more suggestions or support you can always contact me at:

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