



Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility

Specific Support to Georgia

Options for Improving the Effectiveness
of the R&I System of Georgia through
Prioritisation, Selectivity and Links to
Business/Industry

5-8 / 02 / 2018

Purpose of this meeting

The purpose of this meeting is threefold:

- 1) Report on our preliminary ideas
- 2) Hear your reactions and suggestions on these
- 3) Initiate a focused conversation across organisational, field and domain lines in Georgia

Contents

- **Remit of our visit**
- **Over-arching issues of the ERI system in Georgia**
- **Prioritisation in ERI:**
 - Why priorities are a necessity?
 - Situation at present
 - Key assumptions
 - Criteria for selection
 - Options

Remit of the Expert Group

Provide tailored advice and specific recommendations to the Georgian authorities linked to the following three focus areas for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies:

- 1. Support to identify promising research fields (prioritisation)**
- 2. Proposal for performance-based funding of research entities (PBRF)**
- 3. Measures for narrowing the gap between research and industry/business**

Georgia ERI system/policy achievements

Much has been achieved over the recent years to improve the R&I system, e.g.:

- innovation funding has been introduced via GITA,
- public expenditure on R&D has been raised
- SRNSF has been established as a research funding agency with a diversified portfolio of instruments,
- R&I statistics have been somewhat improved
- ...

Over-arching issues of the ERI system needing to be addressed

1. Fragmented ERI system

Options

- Integrate research facilities and equipment and facilitate equipment sharing.
- Create 3-4 R&I Centres around the equipment and facilities, establish a joint research agenda.
- Rationalise, based on independent evaluation, research labs and institutes.
- Create ‘platforms’ to enable interactions between organisations, research fields and domains.

2. Unclear authority structures regarding research funding, priorities and evaluation

Options

- Define clearly the roles of the strategic, operational and performance levels, and ensure interactions between coordination/decision bodies at these levels.

3. Incomplete reform of the RIs and lack of integration

Options

- Full integration of RIs in the universities, with possibilities for research and teaching activities.
- Evaluate the work and position of the RIs to enable rationalisation and integration in universities.

4. Contradiction between ease of doing business and complications of doing research

Options

- Rules and administrative hurdles need to be reduced and cut at the levels of ministry, agency and university administration.
- R&I activities have to be made, administratively, as easy as possible.
- The country should also pride itself for the ease of doing research and innovation.
- Introduce impact assessment and measure progress on reducing red tape

5. Research infrastructure and facilities in decline

Options

- Upgrade the equipment and facilities of priority areas to at least medium (international) standard.
- Concentrate research equipment and facilities.
- Work out equipment sharing arrangements across research groups.

6. Measures (system level) to achieve high level ERI performance

Options:

- Training for research managers.
- Further increasing the payment of researchers.
- Incentives to bring emigrated researchers back; collaboration and links
- Strengthening research groups, attracting young people and educating them to address the aging of research personnel.

7. Base line funding for research

Options

- Base-line research funding in the Georgian ERI system open to all public research entities
- Decisions on base-line funding should be performance.
- Research and innovation priorities - to be decided yet - may form an additional basis for the allocation of base-line funding

8. Mismatch between low level of funding and size and breadth of the ERI system

Options

- Rationalisation of the ERI system
- Continue targeted efforts to increase research funding
- A proactive, state-level attraction of international funds is required, e.g. EU European Neighbourhood instrument

Exercise 1

- Please take 20 minutes to discuss:
 - Are there any issues of the Georgian ERI system that we are missing?
 - Are there any issues you would disagree with?
 - Which are the three issues you'd like to see approached first?
 - Focusing on the three issues you believe are key to approach, go back to the options we have proposed. Are these appropriate? Can they be enacted (done)? What are the conditions for these changes to occur?

Prioritisation in Research and Innovation

Why the Georgian ERI system needs priorities?

- When prioritisation becomes a ‘priority’?
- Resources cannot support the whole range of opportunities

Priorities: current situation

- There are approximately 90 research priorities

Can you see the problem?

- Mechanisms to decide on priorities?

Priorities: key assumptions

- Low level of funding and the mismatch with the size and breadth of the research system limit priority areas to 3-4
- Identifying and enforcing a small number of research priorities is of vital importance for the future of Georgia and for increasing its competitiveness
- **Research priorities should be integrated with the strategic priorities of the country and the priorities for innovation**
- Unified ERI policy needs to be developed, or these policies need to be aligned through coordination, funding mechanisms and frameworks

Criteria for indentifying priorities

- Importance of area/field for the future prosperity of Georgia, for improved competitiveness based on innovation, and for the wellbeing of its citizens.
- Is there business/industry (or potential for developing industry) that supports this priority.
- Level of excellence of research and innovation field(s) as measured by traditional indicators and application.
- Quality of infrastructure (buildings, etc.), facilities and equipment and how expensive it will be to upgrade this to at least average international standards.
- Is there critical mass (in the context of Georgia) in the R&I field in terms of size, research capacity and sustainability

Arrangements for selecting priorities

- Introduce a **structured, robust and consensual prioritisation process** in the country, based on tried and tested methodologies (international participation)
- Decision making process; authority to decide on priorities at strategic levels of the ERI system
- Wide spread consensus and buy in by all parts of the system
- Implementation structures and arrangements

Techniques/methodologies for identifying research priorities - 1

Option 1 - Foresight exercise

- assess the potential of the research base, including via international peer review.
- achieve consensus between different participants/stakeholders of the ERI system - via structured workshops
- generate priority ideas that cross research, innovation and the economy.

Techniques/methodologies for identifying research priorities - 2

Option 2 - Smart specialisation (S3)

- Smart specialisation is a regional policy framework for innovation driven growth.
- It helps focus resources on key national and regional priorities, challenges, and needs for knowledge-based development.
- bottom-up process relying on an entrepreneurial discovery process, which involves various stakeholders
- Georgia could try to join a S3 process initiated by the EU's Joint Research Centre for MD, RS, UA
- S3 should be applied in GE for the whole country/at national level

Implementation of priorities

- Areas, research fields or institutes?
- ‘Put your money where your mouth is’
- Different positive incentives
- **Monitoring & evaluation** of priorities and related programmes will be necessary, as well as feedback loops and adaptations of the programmes

Exercise 2

Please take 20 minutes to consider:

- 1) What are the three top priorities for Georgia as a country (social and economic)
- 2) Does science in Georgia have a role to play in these? What is this role?
- 3) If you were in a position to decide the three top ERI priorities in Georgia, which would this be? Please justify your choice.