

Seminar on policy support to reforms of national research and innovation systems in Europe

Summary report



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Summary report

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INTRODUCTION

The European Commission Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (PSF) has been launched in 2015. The PSF is a coherent and systematic framework as well as a large pool of expertise aiming at responding quickly and efficiently to requests for national R&I policy reforms by Member States and countries associated to Horizon 2020.

This report provides the summary and conclusions of the debates held during a Seminar on country-specific activities under the PSF, which took place in Brussels on 11 December 2017 (Agenda in [Annex 1](#)). The Seminar responded to the wish of Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation to take stock of the knowledge generated so far by the PSF by means of an open dialogue between representatives from all parties involved in policy support (List of PSF activities in [Annex 2](#)). The ultimate goal of the Seminar was to provide directions for designing future PSF activities. Another seminar, dedicated to mutual learning exercises methodologies is planned in 2018, to complete the picture.

The Seminar provided a platform for exchanging lessons learned between 50 highly experienced participants representing national authorities, high-level experts working with the PSF, representatives of European countries that benefitted from PSF support, and international organisations involved in reviews of national research and innovation systems (List of participants in [Annex 3](#)). The debates during the Seminar were oriented towards the identification of success factors and suitable approaches to maximise the success and impact of policy support activities.

A discussion paper¹ was made available to the participants as a background to the debates. It provided information as well as insights on the diversity of approaches and methods used in country-specific support activities - within the European Commission and other international organisations - and identified challenges to be addressed to raise the impact of such activities. Four broad topics have been proposed for discussion during the Seminar, and each of them was the subject of a specific session:

- 1. The organisation of policy support activities – the role of international organisations and the provision of a conceptual framework.*
- 2. Success factors for effective policy support: issues for the host country.*
- 3. Success factors for effective policy support: the role of external contributions.*
- 4. The follow-up and maximisation of impact from policy support activities.*

This report includes two chapters:

- **Chapter 1:** summarises the key points raised during all sessions of the Seminar.
- **Chapter 2:** highlights conclusions and perspectives for future policy support activities under the PSF.

¹ <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/policy-support-facility/seminar-policy-support-reforms-national-research-and-innovation-systems>

1 SUMMARY OF SEMINAR DEBATES

1.1 Lessons from European Commission peer reviews and specific support for R&I under the PSF

PSF actually supports reforms in R&I: let's stay ahead of the curve

From the European Commission's point of view, as highlighted by Director General Robert-Jan Smits, the type of policy support delivered under PSF is crucial. There is ample evidence that science and innovation drive upwards economic convergence and unlock productivity growth, competitiveness and high quality well-paid jobs. And R&I investments are much more impactful if accompanied by reforms that increase the quality and efficiency of national R&I investments, systems and public policy. The role of PSF is to support such reforms by mobilizing the vast amount of expertise and policy practice around R&I in Europe.

With twenty-six activities implemented since 2015 (and many in the pipeline), the PSF induces reforms: e.g. the Polish "Constitution for Science" that will revise the Polish national science and higher education system reflects some of the PSF recommendations; the PSF recommendations for Moldova were used for its new Research Code and led, among others, to the creation of a dedicated Ministry and Funding Agency; the process of renewing the Hungarian RDI Strategy is based on the PSF Peer Review findings. Nevertheless it is timely to examine the possible improvements in PSF methods in order to "stay ahead of the curve". Experience from all PSF stakeholders, as well as good practices from other EC activities (Inco-Nets, Structural Reforms Support Services) and international organisations (OECD, World Bank, IBD, UNECE), need to be mobilized to prepare for the next wave of PSF.

PSF is part of a broader EU policy framework around "3R": a call for more synergies

PSF interventions take place within a broader EU policy framework, summarised by Director Kurt Vandenberghe along a "3R" frame: "Reforms" (towards better research quality and the ERA); "Regulations" (providing better framework conditions for R&I) and "Resources" (investments).

Regarding "Resources" Director Kurt Vandenberghe pointed out that it is important to include the European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF) as these funds provide major contributions to R&I investments in Europe. Ensuring synergies between work done under PSF and under ESIF is a necessary step forward according to Paulo Andrez, Chair of PSF in Slovakia and Romania. Backing up the latter point, Professor Luc Soete, Chair of the Peer Review in Bulgaria, added another 'bridging' argument: the division between Education and Research, which is a historical legacy in particular in widening countries, is now outdated. PSF should be able to act upon a reinforcement of the bridge between Education and Research.

Regarding "Reforms", PSF contributes to the improvement of R&I policies but this is also directly supported by other EC activities, as emphasized by Director Kurt Vandenberghe: economic analysis and indicators, as well as the European Semester. The PSF and the European Semester cross-fertilise each other: PSF provides central inputs for the Research and Innovation chapters of the European Semester country reports, and the Semester outcomes spark PSF action. Reinforcing synergies with a broad range of other EC activities will help PSF reach its ambitious goal.

PSF holds unique features in the landscape of R&I policy support

People with long experience in policy support in R&I such as Professor Luc Soete claim that PSF activities differ from OECD and World Bank reviews. The PSF activities' unique features are summarised by the expert Claire Nauwelaers: PSF is challenge-driven, customer-oriented, flexible and geared towards policy practice. In common with other international policy support activities, PSF adopts a systemic frame, a policy-oriented approach, and combines country-specific features with international good practices in the design of advice. These shared

elements provide a good opportunity for international learning, and this is best done through interactions between members of a community of practice - the participants in the Seminar.

The PSF challenges revolve around "4F"

Director Kurt Vandenberghe proposed four challenges to which the PSF should respond in view of maximising its impact. New or improved methods and approaches could be defined under each of these "4F":

- **Framing:** Political commitment in the host country and full stakeholders' mobilisation are critical success factors, PSF's success is as good as its implementation.
- **Focus:** analyses and advices should target well-defined and highly relevant issues. Luke Georghiou, Chairman of the Peer Review of Spain, gave its testimony of a usefulness of a preliminary phase where the Ministries' demands for policy support are clarified and better articulated: "don't treat questions that do not need an answer!". Paulo Andrez stressed the need to understand "the reasons behind" a policy support request (sparring new reforms? Getting external legitimacy for existing courses of action?). Luc Soete expressed also his belief that a clear focus on major gaps in a national system is a more promising direction for PSF than all-encompassing reviews. The example of support in regulation (writing bills) as a major focus in Slovenia was brought by Jana Kolar, PSF expert in MLEs. There needs to be clarity in the host country about why the support exercise is taking place.
- **Flexibility:** there is no one-size-fits-all in terms of policy advice, solutions to the identified issues are increasingly customised / tailor-made. Fast response is key. PSF Chairs take the "no one-size-fits-all" mantra seriously. For Luke Georghiou and Krzysztof Gulda, Chair of the Peer Review of Moldova, this means that peers and experts should have the right experience, skills, language abilities to get to grasp the specific cultural mindset and country context in the reviewed countries.
- **Follow-up:** ensuring the effectiveness of PSF activities, which need some time to become visible, requires a follow-up, in the form of a PSF "after-sales service". Director General Robert-Jan Smits noted that the EC has means at its disposal to ensure a due follow-up, using the European Semester and the ESIF as well as further increased synergies with the Commission's Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) and with the new Reform Delivery Tool. Luc Soete and Krzysztof Gulda agreed that follow-up activities are a must, and should be tailored to each country context.

The success of PSF depends on the right involvement of the right people at both ends

The persons acting as Chairs of PSF Peer Reviews identified important success factors for such exercises, which are all linked to the human resources involved, from both sides (the PSF panel and the host country actors):

- The choice of the people in the review panel directly influences the quality of the report, a key parameter of PSF success. Hans Chang, Chair of the Peer Review of Ukraine, and Krzysztof Gulda both argued that the choice of the rapporteur is crucial, as well as the presence of the right set of skills and the establishment of "good chemistry" between peers and experts. Luke Georghiou and Paulo Andrez even see the panel as "one team" without distinction between peers and experts, caring for complementarity of expertise.
- The selection of people to be met in the reviewed country is another crucial choice, according to Krzysztof Gulda. For the PSF to meet its ambition of "moving from analysis to understanding", there is a need to broaden the set of stakeholders beyond older members of the hierarchy and usual suspects, and to incorporate users, outsiders and young people. Both Hans Chang and Paulo Andrez pinpoint the value of informal meetings with locals, which help PSF actors to get a better understanding of issues at stake.

The success of PSF depends on a good articulation of policy messages

An efficient way of working, according to Luke Georghiou's experience, is to establish key messages early, and then develop detailed understanding and argumentation to support the messages. Delivering clear and detailed policy messages is seen as one overall key success factor for the PSF by Hans Chang, and Paulo Andrez emphasizes the importance of the operational character of the recommendations ("do not write books!").

Designing policy messages that are looking towards the future rather than deepening critics of the past: this is a most efficient approach according to Luke Georghiou.

1.2 Lessons from country-specific support for R&I in other international circles

PSF action can be enhanced by complementary activities at EC level

The European Commission's SRSS, represented by Geraldine Mahieu, provides on-request assistance to Member States for the implementation of reforms in various areas. In particular, SRSS can send experts *in situ* for a long period to address missing capabilities. Like the PSF SRSS actions are demand-driven, flexible support services which are tailor-made for each country. They meet a growing demand by Member States. Lessons learned from SRSS are that: clear commitment from the Member States as well as the capacity of administration are crucial success factors; the quality of the terms of reference for SRSS action are another important determinant of success; and SRSS services act as carrots rather than sticks. This experience suggests that SRSS (providing tailored technical assistance for the implementation of reforms) and PSF (providing tailored policy recommendations for the design and roll-out of reforms) complement each other very well.

Another EC strand of action are the INCO-Net projects, which were funded under FP7 and had the aim to foster cooperation between Member States and Eastern partnership countries in the field of research and innovation. Klaus Schuch, rapporteur of the PSF Ukraine, explained that those exercises differ from PSF in that they are one-off projects, limited in time, which are not integrated into a wider frame such as PSF. The NIS framework is well adapted to countries of the Eastern partnership as it helps them to move towards a less linear approach of research and innovation. INCO-Nets, which sometimes incorporate training activities, are helpful as capacity building and learning exercises, and to support implementation of PSF activities e.g. in Ukraine. The fact that INCO-Nets are not supported anymore leaves a gap that can be taken up by PSF.

International organisations face many common challenges in their policy support work, a vital one being capacity shortages in countries

The OECD Innovation Policy Reviews, presented by Gernot Hutschenreiter, have a long history and high reputation, and a large collection of reviews is available. The reviews are nurtured by, and feed into a larger knowledge base at OECD. The functions of OECD reviews extend beyond the support to STI reforms: they also nurture other OECD work and they open doors to non-OECD countries such as China. Noticeable changes have occurred recently: the demand for reviews from non-OECD countries is growing; and there is a growing customisation of reviews around more focused themes (even if broad headings remain the same). OECD reviews are faced with two important challenges: 1) government fragmentation, which is hampering the work that strives to take a whole-of-government approach; and 2) capacity deficits in non-OECD countries. Concerning the latter, OECD is cooperating with donor organisations, which have the possibility to send experts to support capacity in host countries.

The World Bank (WB) Public Expenditures Reviews, presented by Xavier Cirera, are demand-driven exercises that are paid for by the country itself, and that is an important feature for policy commitment. The focus of the reviews is to balance the emphasis Ministries of Finance pay on public spending savings, with the aim to promote sound public investments in R&I. The WB is convinced that such analytical exercises are good tools to protect governments against a

'defense of vested interests' syndrome. Faced with the problem of lack of capacities to design and implement policies in reviewed countries, the World Bank deploys an approach oriented towards the development of such capacities. The plans are to repeat reviews every 4-5 years in order to ensure continuity (despite the problem of frequent civil servant changes). The World Bank has also some 'sticks' to use in addition to the 'carrots': loans can be granted conditional to some reforms.

The Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), represented by Juan Carlos Navarro, provides demand-driven country reviews that are often associated with loans or investment programmes, along with technical assistance. The combination with loans offers the possibility of follow-up by IDB. The value of more focused (rather than all-encompassing) reviews is also a new trend at IDB. The IDB uses its own staff to carry out reviews, sometimes in association with other international organisations. IDB sees opportunities for more cooperation with other international organisations, notably the EC.

Several issues faced by international organisations are very relevant for PSF. Ward Ziarko, peer in PSF Poland and Spain and delegate at OECD and ERAC, summarised the most important shared topics:

- In host countries: government fragmentation (which is at odds with a systemic approach, as pointed by Patries Boekholt); capacity shortages (put forward as a vital barrier by Terttu Luukkonen); instability of governments and civil servant changes; a growing demand for more focused reviews; the need to ensure policy commitment; and the attention to be paid to the defence of vested interests syndrome (a point highlighted by Erik Arnold).
- Inside international organisations: the attention paid to following-up reviews; the value of linking the policy support activities with other internal resources and activities (a review is "one tool in a toolbox", said Juan Carlos Navarro); and the opportunities for concertation and cooperation with other international organisations, using specific advantages of each (some concentrate on analytical work, some have more resources to send experts or fund technical assistance, etc.).

Achieving sustainability of external reviews appears as a cross-cutting theme, highly relevant for both recipient countries and international organisations.

1.3 The organisation of policy support activities – the role of international organisations and the provision of a conceptual framework

The national innovation system framework can still be used within a fine-grained approach and involving more stakeholders

Some people believe the innovation systems approach is now challenged: on the one hand by the economic and innovation logic of platform-based, so-called 'open' innovation; and on the other by the debate on how to manage major 'transitions' in socio-technical systems, such as the electricity supply system. A counter-argument was that platform-based innovation is a special case of network economics, where the tendency towards monopoly or 'winner-takes-all' situations raises new regulatory and anti-trust challenges rather than being at odds with the innovation systems heuristic or even the neoclassical economics paradigm. Transitions were argued to be cases best understood in an innovation systems context, but where the increased diversity of relevant stakeholders requires that the innovation system notion be extended to more stakeholder groups than has been traditional in the discussion so far.

The idea of transitions has started to appear in recent OECD innovation system reviews and elsewhere. While the systems studies tend to appear homogenous, there is in practice a great deal of customisation, so that universally-applicable templates are still used while the studies themselves may focus on a sub-set of issues or stakeholders identified by the client country as needing particular study.

The diversity between international organisations' approaches to policy support is an asset to be maintained, for the benefit of recipients

International organisations approach the task of supporting countries in reforming their R&I systems from different perspectives:

- IDB and the World Bank place more emphasis on innovation than the OECD or the PSF, consistent with the importance of private sector development in their missions. The banks fund investment, so they place more weight on that, while the OECD and PSF are more orientated to government policy;
- The style of economics that underlies the thinking of the different organisations also affects their foci. North American-style neoclassical economics and its variations are important for the banks. The OECD tends towards a more heterogeneous mixture of traditional neoclassical economics and other styles. The PSF is if anything even more open to diverse theoretical influences.

A result of this diversity is that countries in need of review are at least sometimes in a position to select the perspective that is most useful to them in a particular circumstance. There is no sense in which one approach is 'better practice' than another. Nor was there a sense that two or more 'supplier' organisations would always add value through doing joint studies – clients pick the offering that suits them best and a degree of overlap between their offer is seen as a positive element.

A novelty, however, was that it may be useful to do multi-country studies in some cases, such as that of the Pacific Alliance. The OECD has done a common innovation system study among a handful of SE Asian countries. It is not yet clear whether such situations will remain rare or whether there are more opportunities to add international value.

Compulsory reviews have some assets over voluntary ones

In the OECD, economics and environment reviews are a compulsory part of the membership package; other reviews and studies are *à la carte*. It was argued that the compulsory nature of these reviews has a certain value in keeping up performance, though not too many things should be compulsory. A value of the compulsory reviews is that they have a rhythm – the countries have to think about them at regular intervals.

Opportunities exist to capitalise more on country-specific data

One issue shared by international organisations (including the Commission) concerns the possibility for better exploitation of data. Large amounts of country-level data are collected in country studies but are not shared, curated or coordinated. There may be an opportunity to add value through such activities.

The problem of fragmentation needs also to be addressed on the international organisations' side

The participants at the Seminar highlighted the important difficulty of government fragmentation in beneficiary countries (see section 1.2). The point was made that international organisations are as prone to developing internal silos as the countries they work for. This can even lead to contradictory policies and recommendations.

1.4 Success factors for effective policy support: issues for the host country

The host for a PSF review should match its scope: cross-governement body for full peer review, dedicated body for specific support

First and foremost, the request for conducting a PSF review should come from whoever has the power to act on the recommendations given to the host country. Normally that would mean a Research or Economic Affairs Minister. However, in PSF peer reviews research and innovation policies are usually analysed from the system perspective, touching upon issues from other sectors (such as education, taxation, etc). For this reason, it may be useful to engage also other relevant ministries in the exercise. Should there be an Innovation Council with a

mandate over the whole of innovation system, that could also be an appropriate organisation to oversee the peer review, provided it has also the power to act on the given recommendations. In this respect, the scope of PSF Specific Supports are narrower than full Peer Reviews, and therefore they are perhaps more easily hosted by merely one ministry. While engaging the whole of government may be useful for hosting the peer review, for the practical support to the implementation process, it may be best to have just one clearly responsible ministry or agency in charge.

The definition phase for a PSF activity is crucial for ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the work

Defining the scope of a peer review is important for the sake of efficiency of work and naturally for the relevance of the exercise. This is also part of the negotiation with the EC prior to the peer reviews. An analytical background report can be one important asset for the good scoping of the peer review – raising the key challenges and issues that could or should be looked into. A thorough and high standard background report will save the time of reviewers by helping them to focus their work on the key issues more quickly. It was mentioned that earlier ERAC peer reviews have used a self-assessment tool (SAT) which was designed to identify the key challenges and to help define the scope of the peer review.

A well conducted preparatory phase in the planning of a peer review will be much appreciated later, helping to clarify and deepen the scope of the actual review. One should also pay attention to the experts engaged in the process, to ensure their competence background sufficiently covers all anticipated aspects of the review. There is also a possibility to use a sounding board of national experts for the reflection on the scope and analyses of the review. Also, a separate scoping mission could be conducted during the planning of the peer review work.

PSF activities need to be well prepared to engage relevant and influential actors, also from outside R&I sphere, from the host country

As a basic requirement, a country requesting for a PSF review should already at that point demonstrate it can sufficiently engage relevant stakeholders on board to the exercise, and that it has the capacity to host the review process. In response, the Commission should make sure this is indeed the case. There is also a possibility for conducting a pre-peer review to elaborate these issues (i.e. ensuring the conditions, identifying key challenges, engaging stakeholders, thematic scoping, etc). Of course, the peer review process should be open and flexible enough, to allow further stakeholders to be engaged as needed.

To ensure a sufficiently broad representation of stakeholders in the peer review exercise, it is important (and challenging) to engage and motivate particularly those stakeholders for which research and innovation policy is not their normal duty (e.g. private sector, other sector ministries and agencies, etc).

Involving the media in the process is also relevant to support the aims of the review process. When the peer review is led by sufficiently high political level (e.g. PM, president), the media will come automatically. Obviously, a relevant topic, a good case to present, and an appropriate timing of the exercise will play an important role in attracting and engaging the media.

The provision of high quality data and information is an important ingredient for the success of a policy support activity

Sufficient data and information of high quality are important to the success of a PSF exercise. Recently conducted RIO-reports and other analytical studies are the starting point, before conducting any further analyses. However, it was raised that not all available or prepared background reports are objective, have sufficient coverage, are up-to-date, or of sufficient quality. It is usually very difficult to find information from those regarding how well a system actually works, or which part doesn't work. In this light, earlier Erawatch reports were considered as an example of objective and useful background documents.

There is also a question on factual information vs information that is not found in the official reports. The most difficult challenges are not always found in the formal background reports. For addressing these, one may need to engage with the local experts and stakeholders. After all, it remains on the competence of the peer reviewers and experts to challenge the reports and to see beyond the evident, or behind the facts of the report, and to ask questions which were not yet raised. And then to be sufficiently bold and daring, as requested.

In addition to provision of data and substance to the peer review, the host country has an important task to support and facilitate the actual reviews – making local arrangements, providing contacts, etc. For this, sufficient amount of physical resources should be allocated.

1.5 Success factors for effective policy support: the role of external contributions

To maximise inputs, external experts should preferably come both from similar and different countries

According to Mart Laatsit's research, policymakers discuss policy with peers and copy policy from 'good practice' countries. His social network analyses, based on interviews with EU-28 RTI policymakers, produced the following evidence: 'strong' links – in the sense of links reported by people at both ends of the link – were predominantly among peer countries with similar geography and level of development; 'weak' links – where one end reported a link but the other end did not – tended to go from those who needed to learn to countries with a strong and long policy histories.

According to participants' experience, in many cases, countries were keen to use peers and experts from similar, often neighbouring countries, because of the similarities in context. A counter-argument was that such team composition risked falling into a 'learning paradox' – one where you cannot learn because you do not know what questions to ask. It was argued that a good team composition might well involve a mixture of 'near' and 'far' experts in order at the same time to handle the context and to create an intellectual and learning challenge, avoiding lock-in.

The choice of external experts should closely match the scope of the policy support exercise

It was observed that the choice of experts is likely to have a strong influence on the outcome of review. This means that the pre-review mission to the country involved is especially important. The choice of experts is interdependent with the definition of the terms of reference.

The choice of external experts should reflect a balance between the virtues of 'old' and 'new' experts

Virtues of experts being 'serial reviewers' were identified. These included building experience, not only in the general process of systems review but also in enabling the broad perspective that is necessary in order to 'de-contextualise' lessons and understand the extent to which ideas are transportable across innovation and policy systems. But there is also a downside in using serial reviewers as this promotes endogamy, pointing to the need to introduce new people into the expert community.

The panel composition needs to be prepared carefully, in line with the scope of the exercise, bringing in the relevant mix of technical and social skills

Some reviews are systemic in character and this needs to be reflected in the use of experts with a good understanding of innovation systems and governance. Others are more focused and technical in nature and would benefit from technical specialists of various kinds. Some reviews are hybrid, spanning both types. A further tip on the composition of expert panels is to try to ensure that panels do not include people in cultural or political conflict with each other or with the client country.

The role of the rapporteur is as crucial, because the rapporteur effectively holds the review process together. This is not a job for a scribe but for an expert with some project management ability and high social intelligence to deal both with the team and the client(s).

Chairs vary in their styles and expectations about panel work, from very hands-off to very hands-on. This implies different demands on the rapporteur. The chair-rapporteur relationship is in any case crucial and can be problematic if the social chemistry is bad. All team members need to be 'team players' rather than individualists. They must have the competence to command the respect of other team members as well as the client and at the same time be able to live in close social contact with the rest of the team during country visits, which are often short but are always intense and demanding.

The number of desiderata is high while the number of experts in any one panel is low, so there is a need to ensure the experts individually satisfy most of the desiderata. Selecting experts to work in teams is hard to do using explicit criteria and scoring: rather, it is a 'soft' and knowledge-based process itself demanding skill.

1.6 The follow-up and maximisation of impact from policy support activities

The PSF voluntary character and deep motivation and ownership in host countries are key to maximise impacts from PSF

PSF activities are designed as voluntary activities requested by countries themselves: they act as 'carrots' rather than 'sticks' and this should remain so. This is the most effective way to ensure that all relevant stakeholders – decision-makers as well as actors in the research and innovation system – are motivated and fully engaged in the policy support exercise.

From this point of view it is also important during the PSF activities, to involve the mid-layer administration, and not just the top-layer, because the former are likely to stay in place after the duration of the exercise.

Another possibility, already exploited in numerous PSF activities, is to establish an informal Sounding Board of national actors, who act in their own capacity and can be consulted by the review panel to favour an understanding of 'hidden' issues by the panel and a good match between recommendations and the reality in the country.

The deep motivation of countries at the end of the exercise should be made visible in the form of a Plan of Action which translates the PSF recommendations into an operational route to be followed, identifying milestones, actors, and means to put in place to implement the PSF outputs.

The dissemination phase at the end of a PSF exercise can play an important role in maximising its impacts

If good care is taken to publish and diffuse results from a PSF exercise, this can contribute significantly to the uptake of recommendations contained in the final report. A well-thought diffusion phase should target multipliers within the country who can push the PSF messages beyond those persons and organisations that have been actively involved in the PSF exercise. A wider range of relevant stakeholders may take up these recommendations and use them to push for implementation.

Tight linkages between PSF and other EU activities are also key to maximise PSF impacts in the medium- and longer-term

The European Commission holds two important levers helping translate the advices for reforms of R&I systems and policies contained in PSF reports into reality. In both cases this takes the form of an "encouragement" in the uptake of PSF rather than an obligation:

- The use of ESIF can take PSF outputs into account to shift (EU and national) public funding towards those investments that will contribute best to the needed reforms. This requires

improved communication channels between DG Research and Innovation and DG Regio, in particular during Operational Programmes negotiations. However it is not appropriate nor possible to make the use of ESIF funds conditional to PSF results because this would change the nature of PSF activity and act as a disincentive to use it;

- The EC recommendations to Member States contained in the European Semester are a good vehicle to support and relay PSF recommendations at high political level.

Follow-up activities should be implemented on a voluntary basis and take a medium- or long-term perspective

From the debate on the voluntary vs compulsory nature of a PSF potential follow-up phase, a consensus emerged on the idea that follow-up activities will only work on a voluntary basis. Any policy process is influenced by many other factors than a PSF input, hence it would not be appropriate to make a direct and full link between PSF recommendations and policy changes. PSF advice remains an advice and it is quite natural that only part of the recommendations find their way into the country landscape.

Follow-up activities should be implemented taking into account the time needed to implement reforms, as well as to establish efficient learning processes.

While there is no formal and systematic follow-up mechanisms at play in the international organisations' experiences so far, some examples pave the way towards the future of such exercises. The OECD repeated reviews on the same country, while focusing on different issues, help in establishing an informal follow-up phase of earlier reviews. Early experience of PSF post-peer review specific support in Bulgaria shows that this is a good approach to help countries going forward in implementing suggested reforms proposed in the Peer Review.

2 CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

PSF contributes to enhance the quality of public spending in Europe

Keith Sequeira, Senior adviser at the Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, pointed out that PSF was launched thanks to a consensus² on the idea that the important discussion on whether to spend less public money on R&D (motivated by public spending imperatives) or more (motivated by return considerations, the view from DG Research) should be backed by the imperative to spend this money better. The role assigned to PSF was to help raise quality in research spending. With PSF, the European Commission takes up another role than its traditional regulator or funder roles: it is taking a facilitator and knowledge provision role.

The contributions of representatives from countries which were beneficiaries of PSF support illustrate the value-added of this function. In Bulgaria, according to Karina Angelieva, PSF already has an impact on using ESIF funds more strategically; the follow-up of the peer review takes place thanks to in-depth zooming into key issues revealed by PSF, ensuring ownership by stakeholders. Malta also sees a high PSF value through a "change in culture in the use of ESIF", as phrased by Jennifer Cassingena Harper, as well as a wider stakeholder involvement in research and innovation: actors are more committed as they see more clearly the benefits of the strategy for them. In Moldova too, PSF support was highly appreciated as a good tool for "learning about ourselves thanks to wise and specialised support", said Aurelia Hanganu, who went on highlighting the necessity of post-peer review support at the time of reform implementation. This follow-up support is not always easy to get due to the limited PSF budget. In the Polish case, Agata Janaszczyk remarked that two elements – the capacity of external experts to grasp the complicated national system and the early mobilisation of

² See: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/pdf/state-of-the-union/2013/research-and-innovation-as-sources-of-renewed-growth-com-2014-339-final.pdf>

stakeholders – were key to success for PSF to provide good input in the revision of the national laws on Higher Education and Science (i.e. Constitution for Science).

All national representatives advocated for a continuation of PSF, highlighting the necessity to keep it as a tailor-made and flexible instrument, and to ensure continuity and follow-up of the PSF action.

The future of PSF is bright: an evolution - but no revolution - is in sight

At various moments in the workshop, Director Kurt Vandenberghe and Advisor Keith Sequeira urged all participants to help defining “PSF 2.0” which would “support the definition of policies for the next 10 years”, taking into account the changes in the world of R&I, and embedding PSF in the forthcoming FP9.

Roman Arjona, Head of Unit responsible for PSF at DG Research and Innovation, drawing from all contributions, painted the contours of the future of PSF, which should, according to him, play a key role in the new FP. Broadly speaking, PSF should build on its recognised assets and evolve without changing its basic philosophy, but staying ahead of the curve.

PSF should maintain its good features

The key features that should be maintained in PSF, because they have proven to be effective are:

- **Voluntary character:** a clear message emerged that PSF is there to create “carrots, not sticks”. PSF activities should be demand-driven and not be linked to compulsory strings, because this would generate a loss in value-added from PSF. This feature also implies that the freedom countries have to choose between different models and types of support as offered by EC under PSF or OECD, World Bank, IDB or others is a good thing.
- **Tailor-made and flexible:** the “no one size fits all” mantra is shared by all and fits with the voluntary character. This implies that PSF activities need to be implemented flexibly, in line with countries’ needs, and in a timeframe that is adapted to the policy frame.

PSF should evolve towards broadening several aspects and incorporate capacity building goals

The PSF as it stands should evolve along several lines, which would preserve its existing strengths while reinforcing the effectiveness of the support services. All three phases of PSF activities are open to improvements, as they all contribute to raise their impacts:

- **Reinforcing the PSF definition phase, ensuring more focus and political commitment:** this phase should be reinforced and turned into a “negotiation phase” in view of re-articulating demands when needed (“don’t treat questions that do not need an answer”; “try to understand the question behind the question”) and ensure that there is a clear focus within the PSF mandate. A consensus emerged on the need to evolve from all-encompassing reviews towards well-defined and tailor-made questions, focusing on major needs and gaps. Clarifying the focus is also necessary to succeed in the crucial task of choosing the right people with the right skills in a panel, displaying complementarity of expertise and with the social skills to achieve the best “panel chemistry” and make it “one team”. And finally, a well-defined focus is also a necessity to tackle the problem of government fragmentation and ensure that the right ministries are engaged right from the start.
- **Reinforcing the PSF implementation phase, by ensuring ownership and trust from a wider set of stakeholders and stressing the capacity building dimension:** the new challenges faced by research and innovation system and the need to link these more clearly to societal challenges beyond the narrow R&I sphere, calls for targeting a broader stakeholder group. To “move from analysis to understanding”, it is important to incorporate cultural dimensions and address the role of R&I in a wider perspective (higher education,

industry, economic parameters). A weak capacity in national administrations is a very common barrier for implementing PSF activities successfully: capacity building, seen as a long term goal, should be incorporated into PSF objectives, possibly adding training activities in the PSF model (drawing from Inco-Net experiences, using SRSS). Capacity building within the PSF itself should also be reinforced by further nurturing its knowledge base, exploiting cross-cutting lessons beyond the reviewed countries, and creating synergies with the work of other international organisations such as OECD, the World Bank or IDB.

- **Reinforcing the PSF follow-up phase and linking it better with other EC levers:** a follow-up phase needs to be firmly incorporated into the PSF, still on a voluntary basis. Such a PSF “after-sales service” would have the role not only to support concrete implementation of PSF recommendations but also to promote continuity of learning in the host countries. Some form of continuous learning platforms based on PSF activities might be formed to this aim. And the outputs of PSF should be closely linked to other EU activities: cross-fertilisation with the European Semester, influence on a more strategic use of ESIF, synergetic use of Structural Reforms Support Services. This way, PSF will become “one tool in the EC toolbox”. Another avenue for more effective “post-PSF” activities lies in the possibility to deploy more complementarities and more exchange of information with other international organisations active in the same countries and intervening with a different angle (WB, OECD, IDB).

ANNEX 1: SEMINAR FINAL AGENDA



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Directorate A - Policy Development and Coordination
A.4 - 'Analysis and monitoring of national research and innovation policies

**SEMINAR: Policy support to reforms
of national research and innovation systems in Europe
Brussels, 11 December 2017**

Venue: ERCEA ROOM COV2 00/SDR2 AUDITORIUM

09.00-09.30 Opening session

9.00-9.10 **Welcome and introduction**

- **Robert-Jan Smits**, Director-General, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission - *Aim of the seminar and strategic importance of policy learning activities for improving research and innovation systems*

9.10-9.30 **Presentation of key issues**

- **Claire Nauwelaers** (PSF Expert MT, UA, Rapporteur ERAC ES, rapporteur of seminar)

09.30-11.40 Plenary session: Models for policy support

9.30-10.35 **The European Commission's Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (PSF)**

- Keynote: **Kurt Vandenberghe** (Director 'Policy development and coordination', DG Research & Innovation, European Commission) - *Lessons learned from PSF: success and impact factors (10')*
- Open discussion with panelists moderated by **Luc Soete** (Chair PSF BG), pre-defined questions shared with panelists and intervention of the audience (60')
 - Panelist 1: **Hans Chang** (Chair PSF UA)
 - Panelist 2: **Krzysztof Gulda** (Chair, PSF MD)
 - Panelist 3: **Luke Georghiou** (Chair ERAC ES)
 - Panelist 4: **Paulo Andrez** (Chair PSF SK, RO)

09.30-11.40 Plenary session: Models for policy support

10.35-11.45 **Plenary session 2: OECD, World Bank, IBD and Inco-Net approaches**

Panel (no slides - 30 minutes in total) - Open discussion with audience (20 minutes) moderated by **Ward Ziarko** (peer PSF PL and ERAC ES, delegate to OECD)

- Panelist 1: OECD Gernot Hutschenreiter
- Panelists 2: World Bank - **Xavier Cirera**
- Panelist 3: IBD - **Juan Carlos Navarro**
- Panelist 4: Inco-Nets: **Klaus Schuch** (rapporteur, PSF UA)
- Panelist 5: **EC Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS): Géraldine Mahieu**

11.45-12.00: Coffee break and split into parallel sessions

**12.00-13.00 Breakout sessions 1
ERCEA ROOM 00 SDR3; ERCEA ROOM 00 SDR4**

12.00-13.00 Topic 1 - Organising policy support: the role of international organisations and the conceptual framework

- Presentation by expert-moderator **Terttu Luukkonen** (expert PSF MLEs and BG) (5') debate --rapporteur, **Erik Arnold** (PSF rapporteur LV)

12.00-13.00 Topic 2 - Success factors for effective policy support: issues for the host country

- Presentation by expert-moderator **Santiago Rodriguez-Uriel** (Host ERAC review ES, Expert PSF MT, Peer BG) (5') debate- rapporteur, **Kimmo Halme** (ERAC reviews)

13.00-14.00: Lunch Break

**14.00-15.00 Breakout sessions 2
ERCEA ROOM 00 SDR3; ERCEA ROOM 00 SDR4**

14.00-15.00 Topic 3: Success factors for effective policy support: role of external contributions

- Presentation by expert-moderator **Mart Laatsit** (ERAC review EE) (5') debate - rapporteur **Erik Arnold** (PSF rapporteur LV)

14.00-15.00 Topic 4: Follow up and maximizing the impact of policy support activities

- Presentation by expert-moderator **Jana Kolar** (expert PSF MLEs) (5') debate - rapporteur **Alasdair Reid** (PSF rapporteur LT)

**14.00-15.00 Breakout sessions 2
ERCEA ROOM 00 SDR3; ERCEA ROOM 00 SDR4**

15.00-15.30: Coffee Break

15.30-17.00 Plenary session: conclusion and way forward

15.30-16.00 Key statements from breakout sessions (5' each) and debate with the audience (10') moderated by **Christian Naczinsky** (peer PSF PL)

16.00-17.00 Conclusions and perspectives for the future moderated by **Keith Sequeira** (Senior Adviser at the Cabinet of Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation)

Statements from:

- Expert 1: **Karina Angelieva** (Host, PSF BG) (5')
- Expert 2: **Jennifer Cassingena Harper** (Host MT) (5')
- Expert 3: **Aurelia Hanganu** (Host PSF MD) (5')
- Expert 4: **Agata Janaszczyk** (Host PSF PL) (5')
- **Román Arjona**, Head of Unit responsible for PSF (5')

Contribution from the seminar participants (20') and conclusion by **Claire Nauwelaers** (PSF Expert MT, UA, Rapporteur ERAC ES), rapporteur of seminar (5')

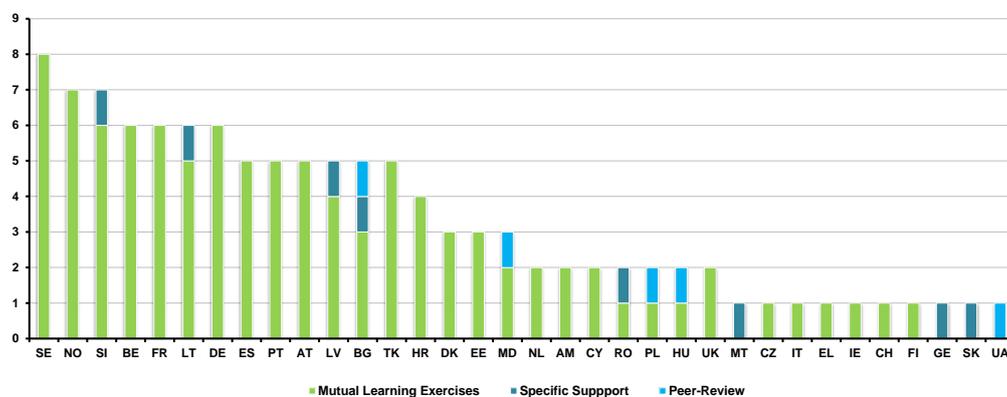
ANNEX 2: CURRENT LIST OF PSF ACTIVITIES

Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (PSF)

Summary list of the concluded, ongoing and planned PSF activities

Find below a summary of the concluded, on-going and planned activities of the PSF. Those foreseen for launch in 2018 follow up from the outcome of the fourth call for expression of interest in the services of the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (circulated to ERAC on 13 June 2017).

Figure 1 Statistics on PSF participation by country



I. PSF Peer Reviews of national R&I systems

PSF Peer Reviews of national R&I systems are in-depth assessments of a country's R&I system carried out by a panel of experts and leading to concrete recommendations to the national authorities on reforms necessary to strengthen their R&I system.

- **Bulgaria** (final report published in October 2015)
- **Moldova** (final report published in July 2016)
- **Hungary** ([pre-Peer Review](#) published in October 2015; [Peer Review](#) in September 2016)
- **Ukraine** (final report published in December 2016)
- **Poland** (final report published in September 2017);
- **Malta** (planned for 2018)

II. PSF Specific Support to countries

PSF Specific Support to countries aims at providing a set of concrete recommendations on how to tackle a specific R&I policy challenge and how to implement the accompanying reforms.

- **Malta** on tools to monitor the national R&I Strategy (final report published in July 2016)
- **Slovakia** on framework conditions for start-ups/ high growth innovative enterprises (final report published in February 2017)
- **Romania** on innovative entrepreneurship (under finalisation)
- **Slovenia** on the internationalisation of science and higher education policies, and on the cooperation between the science base and businesses (under finalisation).
- **Bulgaria** on performance-based funding of public research and on evaluation of research institutions (under finalisation)
- **Lithuania** on attraction of innovation-oriented FDI and on science-business cooperation (final report published in October 2017)
- **Latvia** on the funding system for public research, notably its governance and organisational aspects (under finalisation)
- **Georgia** on identification of promising research fields, science-business links and performance-based evaluation of research entities (launched in October 2017).
- **Tunisia** on private sector participation in R&I and methodology for defining research priorities (starting soon).
- **Cyprus** on the use of publicly funded infrastructures by the business sector (planned for 2018)
- **Montenegro** on the development of the start-up ecosystem (planned for 2018)
- **Estonia** –topic to be confirmed (planned for 2018, possible joint project with OECD)
- **Malta** on open access (planned for 2019)
- **Latvia** on human resources for R&D (planned for 2019)
- **Armenia** on performance-based funding and public research institutions' performance evaluation(planned for 2019)

III. PSF Mutual Learning Exercises

PSF Mutual Learning Exercises (MLEs) focus on specific/ operational R&I challenges of interest to several volunteering countries, and draw on a hands-on project-based exchange of good practice.

- **Pilot Mutual Learning Exercise on measures to stimulate business R&I**, during which the new MLE methodology was proposed (concluded in June 2015);
- **Evaluation of business R&D grant schemes (phase 2)** - launched in June 2017; with participation of **AT, BE, DE, HR, ES, FR, LT, SE, SI, NO, TR, UK;**
- **Administration and monitoring of R&D tax incentives** with participation of **LV, PT, BE, FR, NO, NL, UK** (concluded in October 2016);
- **Evaluation of business R&D grant schemes** with participation of **NO, DK, ES, SE, DE, TR, RO** (concluded in November 2016);
- **Evaluation of complex public private partnerships** with participation of **BE, NO, BG, SE** (concluded in October 2016);
- **Alignment and Interoperability of research programmes** (national coordination) – with participation of **FR, LT, DK, TK, NO, AT, PT, EE, SI, SE and RO (DE as observer)**, dissemination workshop on 28 June 2017 in Brussels ;
- **Performance-based funding of public research organisations** – ongoing, with participation of **AT, CZ, CY, EE, ES, NO, SI, SE, PT, AM, IT, TK, HR, MD;**
- **Innovation procurement** - ongoing, with participation of **AT, EL, EE, LV, ES, PT, DE, SI, FR, IE, NO, TR, BE, LT, SE, NL**
- **Open science** - ongoing; with participation of **LT, SI, FR, BE, LV, CH, PT, HR, MD, AT, AM, SE, BG;**
- **National practice in widening Participation to the EU Framework Programmes and strengthening synergies between H2020 and European Structural Investment**

Funds - launched in May 2017, with participation of **FR, DK, CY, FI, TK, SE, BE, HR, DE (as observer), ES, SI, PL, LV, BG and HU;**

- **Alignment and Interoperability of research programmes** (Second sequence 2019); participation tbc;
- **Research Integrity** (planned for 2018)
- **Digitalisation of science and innovation policies (jointly with OECD)** (planned for 2019)

IV PSF Knowledge Centre

The **PSF Knowledge Centre** <https://ec.europa.eu/h2020-policy-support-facility> makes available all information stemming from the PSF work as well as R&I policy monitoring and analysis performed in the European Semester. It also includes communication material and the latest news about the PSF.

ANNEX 3: FINAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Name and Surname	Country	Position
1	Christian Naczinsky	Austria	Head of Department, EU Research Policy and Coordination, Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy
2	Ward Ziarko	Belgium	Director of the Belgian Science Policy Office (Belspo)
3	Karina Angelieva	Bulgaria	Head of sector for Research and Innovation at the Bulgarian PermRep
4	Ene Kadastik	Estonia	Deputy Head, Research Policy Department, Ministry of Education and Research
5	Andrea Grimm	Germany	Project Management Agency, European and International Cooperation, German Aerospace Center
6	Santiago Rodríguez-Uriel	Spain	Counsellor, Research and Innovation, Permanent Representation of Spain to the European Union
7	Jennifer Harper	Malta	Consultant- Strategy, Policy and Internationalisation Unit, Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST)
8	Aurelia Hanganu	Moldova	Scientific Secretary General of the Moldovan Academy of Sciences
9	Agata Janaszczyk	Poland	Counsellor, Research Section, Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the European Union
10	Melis (YURTTAGUL) KOCATURK	Turkey	Policy Officer, Scientific Programs Expert, TUBITAK Department of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy

International Organisations

11	Gernot Hutschenreiter	Head of the Country Reviews Unit, OECD
12	Juan Carlos Navarro	IDB´s Innovation, Competitiveness and Technology Division
13	Xavier Cirera	Senior Economist, Brazil Country Office, World Bank
14	Lidia Borrell-Damian	Director for Research and Innovation at the European University Association

Experts PSF		
15	Claire Nauwelaers	Independent Policy Analyst and Governmental Adviser, specialised in research and innovation policy, PSF expert MT, UA, MLE
16	Luc Soete	Rector Magnificus Professor of International Economic Relations at the School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University and director of UNU-MERIT, Chair PSF BG
17	Hans Chang	Former Director-General of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts & Sciences, Chair PSF UA
18	Krzysztof Gulda	Council Member of the National Centre for Research and Development in Poland, advisor to the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Chair PSF MD, expert PSF Georgia
19	Luke Georghiou	Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester , Chair ERAC review ES
20	Paulo Andrez	Business angel investor President Emeritus of European Business Angels Network (EBAN) Advisory Council, Chair, PSF SK and RO
21	Klaus Schuch	Scientific director at ZSI (Centre for Social Innovation) and managing director of the Austrian Platform for Research and Technology Policy Evaluation; rapporteur, PSF UA
22	Terttu Luukkonen	Former Chief Advisor and Head of Unit at the Research Institute of the Finnish Economy, expert PSF MLEs and BG
23	Kimmo Halme	Managing Director of 4FRONT team, advisor on STI issues, expert ERAC reviews
24	Mart Laatsit	Visiting Fellow at MIT Sloan School of Management, doctoral researcher and lecturer at Copenhagen Business School, former Head of Innovation Policy of Estonia, host ERAC review EE
25	Erik Arnold	Chairman of the Technopolis Group, part time Professor in International Innovation Policy at the University of Twente and a Visiting Academic at the University of Manchester, PSF rapporteur LV
26	Jana Kolar	Former Director General of Science and Technology at Ministry of Higher education, Science and Technology of Slovenia, currently managing her research intensive company Morana, expert PSF MLEs
27	Alasdair Reid	Founder and Managing Director of European Future Innovation Systems Centre, rapporteur PSF LT
28	Patries Boekholt	Research and Innovation policy expert, expert PSF MLE
29	Ken Guy	Director of Wise Guys Ltd., expert PSF MLE

Experts PSF		
30	Nikos Maroulis	Senior expert on R&I policies and manager of the PSF Framework contract, Technopolis group Belgium
31	Agis Evrigenis	Director of Technopolis Group Belgium

European Commission		
32	Robert-Jan Smits	Director-General, DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
33	Kurt Vandenberghe	Director 'Policy Coordination' DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
34	Keith Sequiera	Senior Adviser at the Cabinet of Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation
35	Román Arjona	Chief Economist and Head of Unit A4 'Analysis and Monitoring of national R&I policies' DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
36	Stéphane Vankalck	Head of H2020 PSF Sector, Unit A4 'Analysis and Monitoring of national R&I policies' DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
37	Diana Senczyszyn	PSF Team leader, Unit A4 'Analysis and Monitoring of national R&I policies' DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
38	Diana Ivanova van Beers	Country desk BG, PSF activities in BG, MT and LV, Unit A4 'Analysis and Monitoring of national R&I policies' DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
39	Cristina Moise	Country desk RO, Unit A4 'Analysis and Monitoring of national R&I policies' DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
40	Marta Truco	Country desk IE, Unit A4 'Analysis and Monitoring of national R&I policies' DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
41	Anca Dumitrescu-Goranov	Country desk MT, Unit A4 'Analysis and Monitoring of national R&I policies' DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
42	Eugenija Puciute	Country desk LT, LV, HR, Unit A4 'Analysis and Monitoring of national R&I policies' DG Research & Innovation, European Commission
43	Géraldine Mahieu	Head of Unit "'Labour Market, health and Social Services', Structural Reforms Support Service (SRSS)
44	Sylwia Czort	Policy Officer, Structural Reforms Support Service (SRSS)

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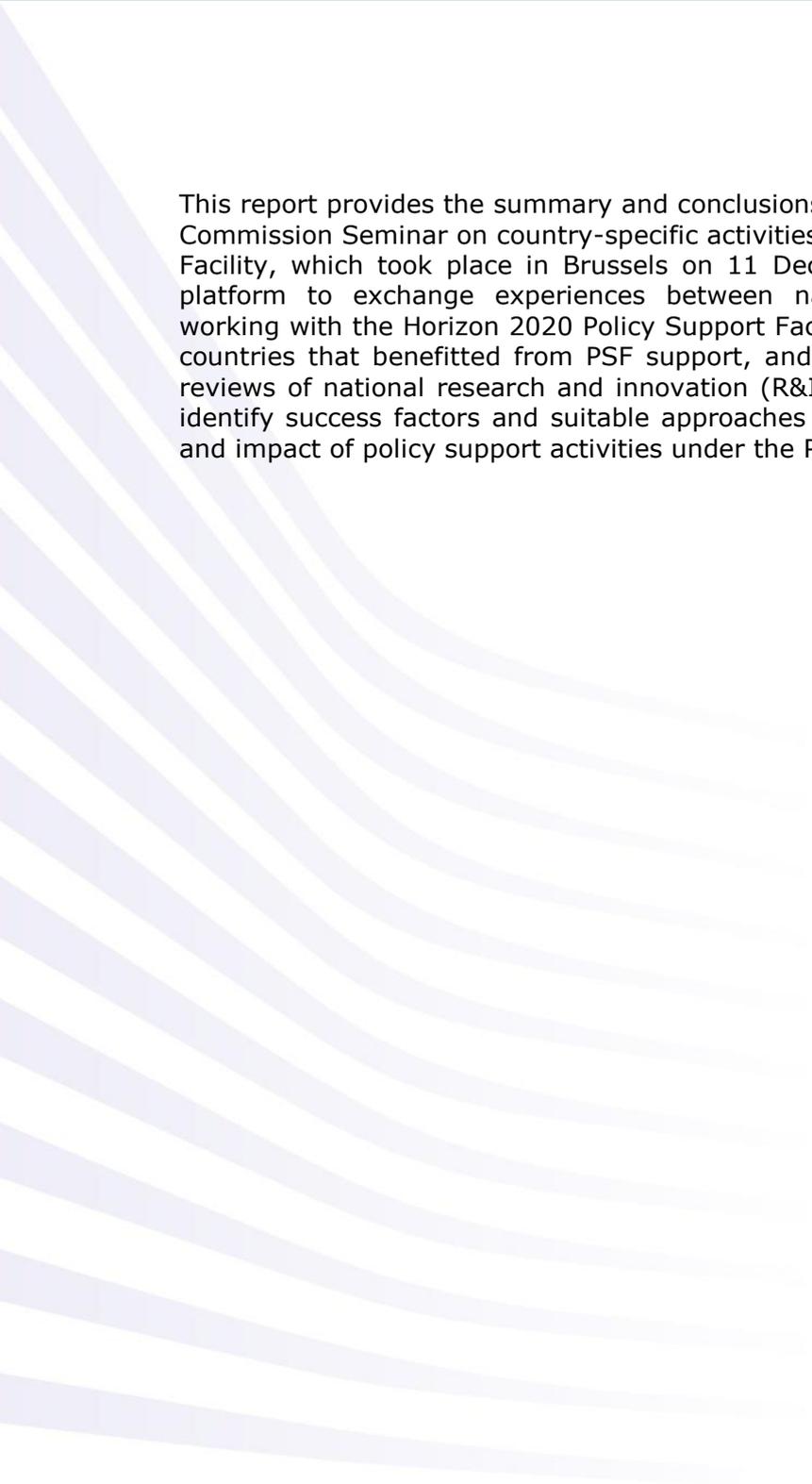
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This report provides the summary and conclusions of the debates held during a European Commission Seminar on country-specific activities under the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility, which took place in Brussels on 11 December 2017. The Seminar provided a platform to exchange experiences between national authorities, high-level experts working with the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (PSF), representatives of European countries that benefitted from PSF support, and international organisations involved in reviews of national research and innovation (R&I) systems. Conclusions of the Seminar identify success factors and suitable approaches with a view to maximising the success and impact of policy support activities under the PSF in the future