

# Joint programming seminar, 19 April 2017

Venue: ATLAS building, Wageningen University & Research

## Final report

### Summary

Besides the Horizon 2020 European research and innovation programmes, various specific joint programming instruments such as JPIs, ERA-NETs, EJPs and Art. 185 initiatives contribute to the alignment and coordination of national and regional research programmes. The purpose of this seminar was to inform about developments and opportunities in joint programming, with a focus on initiatives in food, agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, climate, biodiversity and biotechnologies (the bioeconomy). Speakers from ministries, funding organisations and Wageningen University & Research (WUR) gave their latest information about joint programming. Furthermore, the meeting provided an opportunity to network, exchange ideas and learn from each other.

Information about the current and recently completed ERA-NET research projects with WUR participation were available at the seminar. The seminar was organised by Wageningen International and was attended by thirty-seven people.

The key points from the presentations and panel discussion can be summarised in the following recommendations:

⇒ Strengthen joint programming at the Dutch national level

The Netherlands is struggling with coherent policy. More concerted action between the relevant Ministries, agencies and institutions on a national basis is needed for the Netherlands to maximally exploit its good position in the JPIs.

⇒ Increase visibility of joint programming and its impact

A serious weakness of joint programming is its low (national) visibility, leading to limited support from participating countries and institutions. Showing the impact of joint programming at national level will strengthen the commitment.

⇒ Invest in the joint programming process

The joint programming process needs to be improved by considerable and dedicated investments of the national governments in transnational cooperation, by addressing interoperability on the operational level, and by show-casing the national benefit and the financial leverage of national investments.

## Welcome and Introduction

*Huub Löffler, seminar chairman, Wageningen International; FACCE-JPI*



Huub Löffler, managing director at Wageningen International and governing board member of FACCE-JPI, opened the seminar by welcoming the participants. He gave a brief introduction to joint programming in Europe. He stated that national public R&D funding is much larger than EU funding. For example Horizon 2020 covers just 5% of the total public funding on research and innovation in Europe. With a view to create focus and mass on a large scale, alignment of research, of research programming and of national funding is key for the European Research Area. European Research Area Networks (ERA-NETs), Article 185 initiatives, and the European Joint Programme (EJP) Cofund are instruments for coordination and for organising calls co-funded by countries and EC. Joint Programming Initiatives (JPIs) aim to align the research programming processes on key challenges.

## Presentations

*Edvard Beem, - ZonMw; JPI MYBL*



Edvard Beem, former director at funding organisation ZonMw and chair of the governing board of JPI More Years Better Life (MYBL) described in his presentation what the ten JPIs contribute to European joint programming. In his personal view, JPIs are valuable initiatives for international cooperation, but JPIs need to improve their performance. He summarised key messages and recommendations from the Hernani report, *Evaluation of Joint Programming to Address Grand Societal Challenges*. This report is the result of an evaluation of the JPIs after eight years of performance, commissioned by the EC. Beem informed the audience about the new common initiatives the JPI chairs jointly have taken to improve the performance in response to the Hernani report. He said he believes that performance of JPIs can only be improved by considerable and dedicated investments of the national governments in transnational cooperation, and by show-casing the national benefit and the financial leverage of national investments. Beem's statement for the discussion was that the future of JPIs has to be secured by a high level contract, upfront and including confirmed commitments, between all four members of the Alliance (Member States, EU, JPIs and GPC).

*Dominique Darmendrail, Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR); Water JPI*



As coordinator of the Water JPI, Dominique Darmendrail, key note speaker from abroad, presented its theme and activities. Water JPI partners currently represent 88% of the European national public RDI investment on water. More in detail she discussed WaterWorks 2015. This action aims at pooling resources from the 32 funding agencies of 22 countries to implement an EU co-funded call for proposals in the area of

sustainable water use in agriculture, forestry and freshwater aquaculture. This is the first ERA-NET Cofund that was initiated by two JPIs: Water JPI and FACCE-JPI. WaterWorks 2015 contributes to the implementation of the respective Strategic Research Agendas of both JPIs. In April 2017 the kick off meeting of the 21 funded projects took place. Ahead of the updating of both JPI's Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda's, a common vision workshop will be organised with participation of 5 to 10 experts from both JPIs for finding synergies for future cooperation. Darmendrail also informed about results of the two earlier calls of Water JPI, the first Water JPI Knowledge Hub launched in March on emerging pollutions, outreach activities of Water JPI, and a new Coordination Supporting Action for international cooperation on water.

*Brenda Kuzniar, Wageningen International; PLATFORM*



Brenda Kuzniar is the communication and data manager of PLATFORM, the forum for funders and programme managers in coordination networks in the bioeconomy. She demonstrated the recently established PLATFORM Database (DB), available at [www.era-platform.eu](http://www.era-platform.eu), an open online web resource with information about more than 40 networks (concluded and active ERA-NETs, ERA-NET Plus, ERA-NET Cofund, EJP, JPI and Article 185 initiatives), over 150 transnational calls and over

1100 research projects in the bioeconomy. PLATFORM DB is a searchable, up-to-date and continuously maintained information source, for which the first groundwork was done under FP7 PLATFORM for a book on Bioeconomy ERA-NET Actions published April 2014. The repository gives insight in, for example, participation and budgets in networks and calls, and the wide range of subjects and disciplines of the research projects funded through the bioeconomy related funders networks. Search and selection functionalities are built in to generate aggregated information on for example country involvement in the partnerships and number of partnerships under a specific instrument. Furthermore, factsheets of networks, calls, research projects and organisations' participation can be retrieved with a few simple clicks. PLATFORM DB aims to serve programme managers, funders and the science community, as well as other stakeholders interested in research funding, programming and performance in the bioeconomy.

*Josef Stuefer, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)*



Stuefer, senior policy advisor and program manager at funding organisation NWO and management board member of JPI Oceans, described in his presentation joint programming and funding in the Netherlands. Based on the Hernani report, he showed that the Netherlands is number one in participation in joint calls, if call budgets are considered number four: *"We love joint programming"*.

Given its prominent participation, the Netherlands is too modest in taking advantage of the results, according to Stuefer. With an even more coherent national policy on joint programming, the Netherlands would benefit greater impact and could have more influence on the role of joint programming and on 'lobby' actions of the JPIs. The strength of JPIs is that they make collaboration easier between European Member States and Associated Countries. Moreover, JPIs offer thematic frameworks for public-to-public partnerships under instruments like

ERA-NETs and the new European Joint Programme (EJP) Cofund. According to Stuefer, a serious weakness of joint programming is its low (national) visibility, leading to limited support (financial, political) from participating countries and institutions. On the other hand, opportunities to improve the performance of JPIs are quite straightforward: getting a stronger link with the (9<sup>th</sup>) Framework Programme and thematic linkage with the Dutch National Research Agenda (NWA).

## Pitches

In two pitches, researchers at WUR shared their experiences of ERA-NET research projects.

*Ron de Goede, Wageningen University & Research (WUR)*



De Goede, researcher at the chairgroup Soil Biology & Biological Soil Quality at WUR, shared his experience with two ERA-NET transnational research projects: FertilCrop; funded under the ERA-NET CORE Organic by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, and Ecoserve; funded under the ERA-NET BiodivERs by the Dutch Research Council NWO. In his experience, these transnational ERA-NET projects give the opportunity to strengthen the international position of his department, through the cooperation with leading soil scientists in Europe and China and by pooling expertise and facilities. ERA-NET projects make it possible for him and his colleagues to explore new technologies. There are also critical remarks: the funding rules of NWO result in a financial gap when appointing a PhD or Postdoc to carry out the research. PhD contracts have a duration of 4 years and an appointment as postdoc is often limited to 2 years and 5 months because of budget constraint, while the project time is 3 years. This hampers the focus of the University to educate PhD's and Postdocs. In order to address this matter, more flexibility is needed to match funding, employment contract duration and project duration.

*Hans Spoolder, Wageningen University & Research(WUR)*

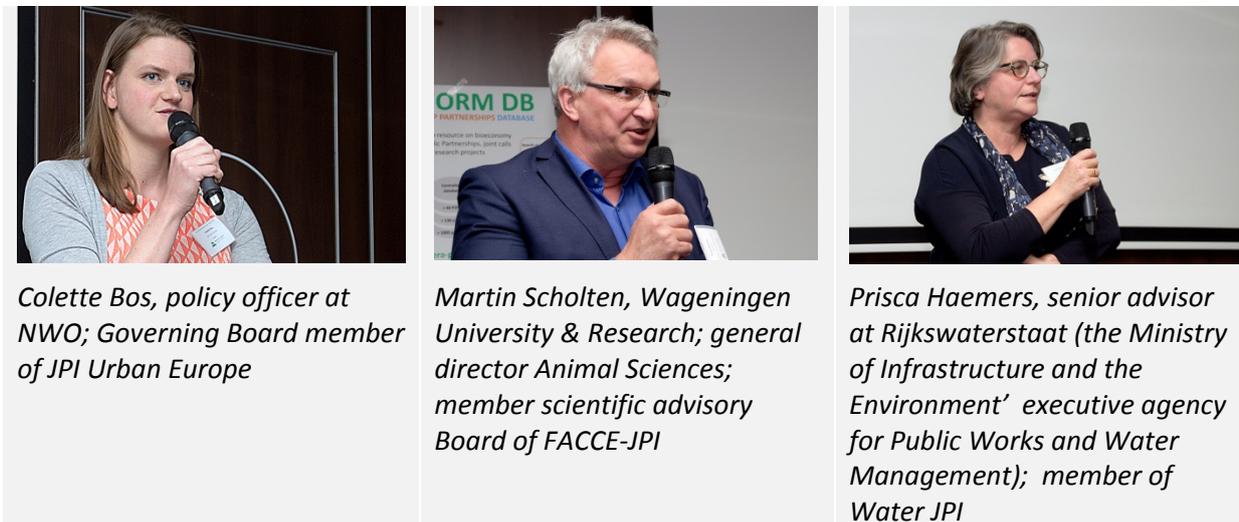


Hans Spoolder is researcher and EU account manager for the Animal Science Group of WUR. He is involved in two ongoing ERA-NET research projects: PigWatch, of the ERA-NET ANIHWA, funded by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and SusPigSys of the ERA-NET 'SusAn' funded by NWO. In his experience an important advantage of transnational research projects is the possibility to involve leading European scientists in the project in order to get strong research consortia. Moreover, Spoolder mentions that transnational research reduces duplication of efforts in the participating countries, what saves tax payers money. Furthermore he stated that ERA-NETs offer direct access to several national networks, whereby a wider application of results is possible. Another advantage of ERA-NETs is that the research topics are chosen and supported by national policy makers, according to Spoolder. Due to this, national funding goes straight to national priorities within the topic. He confirmed the experience of De Goede with the NWO funding rules and added that the current NWO funding rules require own contribution or co-financing when participating in ERA-NETs.

## Panel and Discussion

Huub Löffler called forward the members of the discussion panel and introduced them.

The three panel members were:



*Colette Bos, policy officer at NWO; Governing Board member of JPI Urban Europe*

*Martin Scholten, Wageningen University & Research; general director Animal Sciences; member scientific advisory Board of FACCE-JPI*

*Prisca Haemers, senior advisor at Rijkswaterstaat (the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment)' executive agency for Public Works and Water Management); member of Water JPI*

For the first panel round the chair raised two, related, questions: What is needed to live up to the expectations for joint programming? How could the Netherlands benefit from more coordination? After a reply round the floor was open for questions and comments from the audience. The interventions included the following opinions, observations and remarks:

- The visibility of European cooperation networks like the JPIs has to be increased. Currently there is little attention in the national Science Agenda (NWA) for international cooperation. We need to stress the importance of such cooperation;
- ERA-NETs are regarded as a way to include our (national) policy questions in the European agenda, but we have to realise that Europe does not work according to Dutch legislation. As it is extremely difficult to change EU legislation, we should focus more on changing or adapting our own procedures to fit the needs for such cooperation;
- In the Netherlands we have a lot of experience in working together with the private sector through the Topsector funding mechanism (e.g. a Public-Private-Partnership). Point of concern is that most other countries are not that far developed. Apart from that, in some JPIs, e.g. FACCE-JPI, participation of industry is weak and there is no real incentive yet to make that stronger. Although this makes it harder to demonstrate benefits in participating in JPIs to the Dutch Topsectors, it remains imperative that we do, as this is one of our national strengths.
- In the Netherlands, as in many other countries, we are quite fragmented in the way we organise joint programming at the national level. Many Ministries, agencies and institutions have their own ideas on how to do this, on which topics, et cetera. Although at the national level there is a platform for all the Dutch JPI representatives to exchange, more concerted action between the relevant Ministries, agencies and institutions on a national basis is needed for the Netherlands to maximally exploit its good position in the JPIs;
- The Netherlands could benefit from more coordination or collaboration between the JPIs in order to gain more impact;

- All JPIs recognise the need to work together and organise themselves better, because there is an increasing lack of funding available that forces the JPIs to do so.
- Showing the impact of joint research (programming) at national levels will strengthen commitment. An example are valorisation workshops that FACCE –JPI is currently developing. Scholten participated to the recent pilot valorisation workshop, on climate research impact. He found it a good instrument, but surprising that when it came to impact it was mostly about impact on policy. Stakeholders, however, advised to extend that to impact on society. Another activity directed towards impact is from the JPIs FACCE, HDHL and Oceans together, who are to come up with a kind of integrative approach for the food system: that is where one has impact on policy (FOOD2030);
- A further example that shows the impact of joint programming: FACCE-JPI is considered to be the European counterpart for international organisations in food & climate (such as GRA, CGIAR) and by non-European countries (such as USA, Canada, Brasil, China, Japan, New Zealand);
- If you want to be a factor of importance at the world stage, you need to be a big European programme (e.g. not national programmes) to be able to be a player amongst the international large players like the US. At this level EU cooperation is a must;
- The website and the database of PLATFORM are another example of how impact of joint programming can be showcased and disseminated. There is a wealth of information made easily accessible.
- This data shows that we are spending a substantial amount of money on joint research in the bioeconomy. The large number of relatively small projects is striking. That is a point to consider in terms of impact.
- The Netherlands is struggling with coherent policy. We need to convince lead managers and high policy makers that JPIs have impact.
- JPI Urban Europe is currently experimenting with other instruments to find modes of operation that are easier to fit into the national rules and guidelines. The JPI realises that they ask the impossible of scientists in that they need to cooperate transnational, work on societal challenges, include stakeholders, et cetera. This should also be made easier.
- Joint Undertakings and Joint Technology Initiatives work on innovation. The private sector participates in these cooperations. They could be partners in research, like for example with the ERA-NET SusAn and the Animal Taskforce. Such partnerships are worthwhile to investigate as we are running tight on funds. It would be an extra opportunity to work together as public-private undertakings;
- The GPC supports further investment into JPIs in order to bring JPIs to a higher level of coherency.

Huub Löffler summarised the key points from the panel discussion. He thanked the speakers for their presentations, and all participants for their interest and questions.