



InRoad Policy Brief #1

Insights on research infrastructure roadmap processes, funding and business models

The policy brief builds upon the [InRoad consultation report](#) and the discussions that took place during the InRoad [Engagement Workshop](#) (EW) on 15 and 16 January 2018 (see [workshop report](#)).

The EW provided recommendations from the perspectives of a broader range of stakeholders such as EU and national policymakers and RI funders and managers. These discussions contributed to refining InRoad's first preliminary policy insights released in the InRoad consultation report. Another source of data is the [InRoad Compendium](#), a deliverable containing factsheets on research infrastructure roadmapping procedures, funding, evaluation and monitoring in the 22 Member States (MS) and 5 Associated Countries (AC) that took part in the consultation.

Although preliminary, the policy insights described below provide the project's first recommendations to RI policymakers in order to contribute to a better alignment of RI policies when relevant. These recommendations will be further refined in the phase of the project following a series of interviews and case studies.

RI roadmap processes for RI beyond national relevance

The consultation and the EW highlighted the need to come up with a common understanding of methodological aspects related to RI roadmapping, the purpose of the roadmapping exercise, as well as the interplay between national, supranational and institution-driven roadmapping processes. Considering the diversity of factors driving national roadmap processes, a one-size-fits-all approach is neither desired nor possible and the specificities of national roadmapping processes must be taken into account. InRoad seeks to contribute directly to the European debate by providing minimal key requirements criteria for future national roadmaps for RI beyond national relevance. This would clearly contribute to the European Commission [action plan](#) on long-term RI sustainability.

The case studies and interviews will expand these findings by providing good practices for RI roadmapping and evaluation and contribute to the better alignment of methodologies and processes between national and supranational RI roadmapping.

- **Insight 1: Planning of national and sustainable RI roadmap processes**
 - When planning national RI roadmap processes, a clear joint discussion among all relevant stakeholders on the RI roadmap process is essential to develop a common understanding of the definition and relevance of RI as well as the purpose and process of the national RI roadmapping. Moreover, in order to guarantee their sustainability and robustness, the national RI roadmaps should contain an inventory of available RI and landscape analysis of the current R&I system to identify strengths and gaps. Also, national RI roadmaps should be regularly updated and the implementation status and relevance of new and existing RI should be monitored.

InRoad's findings show that any attempt at alignment or synchronisation should take into account the specificities of national Research & Innovation (R&I) systems as well as the opportunities for alignment at European level. RI stakeholders should therefore identify good practices for RI roadmapping processes. On top of the consultation, InRoad contributes to this by publishing a compendium of national RI roadmapping, funding and evaluation processes as well



as conducting case studies of specific national cases. Still, this task remains challenging. InRoad's aspiration to enhance the alignment between national RI roadmaps and supranational roadmaps acknowledges and respects the sovereignty of each country in setting their specific priorities for their national research policy.

➤ **Insight 2: Alignment between RI Roadmap Processes**

A better understanding of the relationship between national and European levels can help national authorities to take better informed decisions. To enhance the alignment between RI roadmaps, the following points should be considered:

- the purpose and process of the national RI roadmap needs to be defined and communicated by providing publicly accessible guide defining criteria, processes and timelines (aligning national and international RI roadmap processes, e.g. ESFRI, GSO, OECD);
- a common framework needs to define a shared RI classification.

Funding for RI

Building pan-European RIs requires a combination of different funds. Therefore, closer synergies between regional, national and European funding streams are welcomed. InRoad favours closer links between national strategies, funding frameworks and European priorities, which are essential to facilitate the fast and firm development of RIs, as well as their long-term planning, whilst respecting the principle of variable geometry. The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are a relevant source of funding investment for RI in some countries. InRoad recognises that ESIF rules do not always suit RI purposes along all phase of the RI lifecycle. A better understanding of the rules surrounding existing RI funding instruments would improve coordination during the whole lifecycle stages of RIs.

The case studies and interviews will enable to further observe how funding decisions interplay with the defined strategic priorities.

➤ **Insight 3: Sources and coordination of RI public funding instruments**

Interventions aimed at encouraging the use of public funding instruments can be improved through:

- analysing and overcoming the limits and restrictions of the coordinated and synergic use of the individual funding instruments, especially their coherence with European and national processes;
- ensuring better alignments of the implementation rules, allowing different and complementary phased of the same project to be funded between ESIF and other European sources of RI funding;
- improving the availability of information;
- fostering mutual learning through the organization of trainings for stakeholders willing to familiarize themselves with the funding sources available, e.g. RI managers/operators.

Linking RI funding decisions with strategic priorities can be regarded as a major achievement of national R&I policies. Aligning investments with the previously established strategic priorities contributes to the effectiveness and socio-economic impact of said investments. The inclusion of this approach in the decision-making process also provides a predictable environment for future R&I investments. Taking into account the strategic priorities of neighbouring countries is also useful to work towards stronger macro-regional networks of RI.

➤ **Insight 4: Link between Strategic Priorities and RI Funding Decisions**

InRoad encourages the national level to proactively adopt a bigger picture that includes regional, national and Europe funding streams, linking thus strategic priorities and funding decisions of RI.



RI Business plan and national RI roadmapping

InRoad encourages EU MS and AC to make business plan assessments part of their strategic consideration as an eligibility criterion. It is also important that stakeholders have a better understanding of the parameters involved in the planning. Regarding the challenges, which exist in drafting and evaluating RI business plans, InRoad recommends that the focus always be on the business case and on stakeholder engagement, not on the potential impact. Indeed, an emphasis on impact could create false expectations.

Moreover, InRoad stresses the importance of the business plan as part of the investment strategy, as the roadmap itself can be considered as a strategy for investment. In order to set and communicate the priorities, a business plan with clear parameters involved is a necessary part of the roadmap process.

InRoad recognizes the need for all RIs to define access policy as part of a RI business plan and to address the fragmentation and diversification of resources through further alignment. Access policy and modalities require common standards and harmonised access rules and conditions for researchers across the European Research Area (ERA). The European Charter of Access to RI is seen as a reference to ensure the establishment of a regulated framework. InRoad encourages policymakers to improve transnational access policies in order to increase the quality of services as well as the overall impact of the RI and extend their availability to a wider range of users on a European and international scale.

➤ Insight 5: Business Plan as an Eligibility Criterion

As sound financial planning is crucial for the long-term sustainability of RI, MS and AC are encouraged to make business plan assessment part of their strategic consideration, which should include:

- the main RI business plan components taking into account the varied needs of different types of RI (e.g. excellence-driven access facilities vs market-driven access facilities);
- a set of common indicators developed among countries to facilitate the initial evaluation, monitoring and follow-up of RI business plans;
- parameters constituting access policies as well as their implications for funding of RI.

