

EARTO Welcomes Commission FP7 Simplification Measures with Caution

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The European Association of Research and Technology Organisations (EARTO) welcomes the three simplification measures announced by the European Commission on 24 January to make participation in FP7 more attractive and accessible. Two of these measures, concerning the use of average personnel costs and the uniform interpretation and implementation of FP7 rules and procedures, address earlier EARTO demands. EARTO notes that the Rules for Participation remain unchanged and considers that it will be crucial to monitor carefully the implementation of these measures.

Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) particularly welcome the wider acceptance of methodologies to calculate average personnel costs. Allowing beneficiaries to declare their personal costs according to their usual accounting and management practices will considerably ease the administrative burden associated with participation in the Framework Programme and will increase its attractiveness. However, EARTO notes that the changed rules are implemented through a modification of the Grant Agreement, but that the underlying Rules for Participation remain unchanged, which may raise questions of legal certainty.

In view of the uncertainties, frustrations and penalties occasioned by the Commission's ex-post FP6 project audit campaign, many beneficiaries may adopt a cautious approach regarding the new rules and may seek clarification and certainty from the Commission. EARTO anticipates that many beneficiaries will apply for a certificate of methodology (CoMAv) for calculation of their average personnel costs under the new rules. The Commission must therefore ensure that its services are adequately staffed to deal quickly with the potentially large number of requests for certification, in order that the new rules may find rapid application.

EARTO welcomes the creation of a Research Clearing Committee to ensure uniform interpretation and implementation of FP rules and procedures. Its foreseen high-level composition and broad outreach gives confidence that it can succeed in its mission. In line with its earlier proposals in this regard, EARTO wishes that the Research Clearing Committee will accept to examine complaints from actual and potential beneficiaries who consider that their case has received unequal or unfair treatment.

EARTO Secretary General Christopher John Hull said: *"This first batch of simplification measures is welcome demonstration of the Commission's responsiveness to the concerns of beneficiaries. As always, however, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. EARTO will*

be monitoring carefully the practical implementation of the new measures, including at ex-post audit level."

END

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Notes to Editors

RTOs (Research and Technology Organisations)

RTOs have a distinct mission and a key role in the knowledge and innovation economy: they produce, integrate and transfer science and technology to help resolve the grand challenges confronting society and to exploit opportunities for new wealth creation and, hence, improved standards of living. RTOs accomplish their mission through a portfolio of activities and services:

- **monitoring social and economic developments** in order to anticipate and identify future science and technology needs;
- **strategic research** to develop new knowledge and technologies for future application;
- **collaborative and contract research** to develop technologies for specific applications and clients, and
- **knowledge transfer** to ensure the widest possible diffusion and adoption of technologies

EARTO

EARTO is the **European trade association** of the research and technology organisations (**RTOs**), a non-profit organisation founded in 1999. **EARTO groups over 350 RTOs**, with a combined staff of 150,000, an annual turnover of €15 Billion, special equipment and facilities to a value of many € billions and more than 100,000 customers from the public and private sectors annually.

<http://www.earto.eu>

European Commission Simplification Measures

On 24 January, the European Commission announced three simplification measures with immediate and retroactive effect, to make participation in the Framework Programme for Research more attractive and accessible. The Commission press release can be found here:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/57&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Communication on Simplifying the Implementation of the Research Framework Programme, April 2010:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/pdf/communication_on_simplification_2010_en.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none

EARTO Position on the Communication on Simplifying the Implementation of the Research Framework Programme, April 2010:

http://www.earto.eu/fileadmin/content/03_Publications/FinalEARTO_Position_on_SimplificationWith_Cover.pdf

Past EARTO Press Releases on the subject:

<http://www.earto.eu/publications0/>