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COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	23 February 2021
To:	Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
Subject:	Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and the of Council on the participation of the Union in the European Partnership on Metrology jointly undertaken by several Member States - Regulatory Scrutiny Board Opinion

Delegations will find attached document SEC(2021) 91 final.

Encl.: SEC(2021) 91 final

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 4.9.2020
SEC(2021) 91 final

REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD OPINION

Proposal for a DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the participation of the Union in the European Partnership on Metrology jointly undertaken by several Member States

{COM(2021) 89}

{SWD(2021) 35 }
{SWD(2021) 36 }

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Regulatory Scrutiny Board

Brussels, 15/07/2020
Ares(2020)3731485

Opinion

Title: Impact assessment / European Partnership on Metrology

Overall 2nd opinion: POSITIVE WITH RESERVATIONS

(A) Policy context

Metrology is the science of measurement. It makes possible internationally agreed definitions and standards. New technologies and monitoring needs for e.g. climate change will rely on this infrastructure. Metrology is a public good, so markets tend to underinvest in it. National metrology institutes exist to support commerce and innovation. Large institutes exist in the U.S. and China.

This report examines alternative ways to design a partnership under Horizon Europe for the period 2021–2027. This partnership will succeed the current metrology programme EMPIR under Horizon 2020. This is one of 12 related impact assessments that consider an institutionalised partnership as an option. The approach to such partnerships has been agreed in the Horizon Europe Regulation.

(B) Summary of findings

The Board notes improvements to the impact assessment. The report includes additional information on the context and draws more clearly on lessons learnt from previous and ongoing partnerships.

However, the report still contains significant shortcomings. The Board gives a positive opinion with reservations because it expects the DG to rectify the following aspects:

(1) The report does not sufficiently explain how this partnership will contribute to the longer-term vision for European metrology research.

(2) The report is not clear on how private sector actors would be involved under the preferred partnership form (i.e. a public-public partnership) and their incentives to participate.

(C) What to improve

(1) As part of the objective to develop transnational metrology networks, the report

This opinion concerns a draft impact assessment which may differ from the final version.

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explains that as of a certain point (by 2030) a partnership would no longer be necessary. The report should clarify why this is included in the impact assessment and how it links with the current initiative, which covers the financing period up to 2027. If it is confirmed, the report should bring out more clearly how the currently proposed partnership is expected to help establish the necessary conditions for its future discontinuation.

(2) The report should explain better how private sector actors would be involved under the preferred 'public-public' partnership form. It should clarify the incentives for them to engage.

(3) The report could usefully provide more background explanation on the national metrology research bodies and how they function.

The Board notes the estimated costs and benefits of the preferred option in this initiative, as summarised in the attached quantification tables.

(D) Conclusion

The DG may proceed with the initiative.

The DG must take these recommendations into account before launching the interservice consultation.

If there are any changes in the choice or design of the preferred option in the final version of the report, the DG may need to further adjust the attached quantification tables to reflect this.

Full title	**European Partnership on Metrology**
Reference number	PLAN/2019/5303
Submitted to RSB on	22 June 2020
Date of RSB meeting	Written procedure

ANNEX: Quantification tables extracted from the draft impact assessment report

The following tables contain information on the costs and benefits of the initiative on which the Board has given its opinion, as presented above.

If the draft report has been revised in line with the Board's recommendations, the content of these tables may be different from those in the final version of the impact assessment report, as published by the Commission.

I. Overview of Benefits (total for all provisions) – Preferred Option		
Description	***Amount***	***Comments***
Direct benefits		
Integration of metrology research		Faster and more focussed research and development of new metrology techniques. The European Metrology Networks will provide direct channels for the entire metrology value chain within a certain application area, such as in-vitro diagnostics and smart grids.
Accelerated support to uptake of emerging technologies and industrial exploitation		With the industry acting as a direct beneficiary in a collaborative project with the metrology institutes, or as a target customer for the developed foreground. Also the metrology networks with research capabilities can address more directly emerging technologies and the needs of industry.
Strengthened support for societal challenges.		The initiative would also enable a closer pro-active interaction with policy makers in the development of fit-for-purpose standards and regulations.
Indirect benefits		
Global leadership		The pooling of research efforts would lead to metrology solutions at least equal to the top global performers and a net flow of knowledge and services out from Europe.
Metrology dissemination and awareness		The further integration of metrology also through societal needs, policy, standards, and regulations will pull the public appreciation towards the importance of high quality and traceable measurements.
II. Overview of costs – Preferred option		

		Citizens/Consumers		Businesses		Administrations	
		One-off	Recurrent	One-off	Recurrent	One-off	Recurrent
Administrative costs	Direct costs			Cash contribution (~10% of EU contribution)			Supervision and follow-up (~2 FTE)
	Indirect costs			Network setup	Ancillary activities		Horizontal policy
Operational costs	Direct costs		Project proposal preparation - Limited		Running of European Metrology Networks, Capacity building, etc.		
	Indirect costs		Limited		Overheads on project implementation (~140% of direct costs)	Preparation of proposal	

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Regulatory Scrutiny Board

Brussels,
RSB/

Opinion

Title: Impact assessment / European Partnership on Metrology

Overall opinion: NEGATIVE

(A) Policy context

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(B) Summary of findings

The Board notes the additional written information provided in advance of the meeting. The Board acknowledges the efforts to co-ordinate this impact assessment with those for other possible partnerships, while also considering the specificities of this particular initiative.

However, the Board gives a negative opinion, because the report contains the following significant shortcomings:

(1) The report does not adequately describe the current situation and policy context for metrology research. The report does not outline the sustainability of the preferred option. It does not explain the underlying longer-term vision on how national metrology bodies are to interact.

(2) The report does not objectively present what worked and what did not in the previous metrology partnerships. The report does not explain how the new proposed partnership would reflect lessons learned.

(3) The report is not sufficiently clear on how the different options will incentivise and engage key stakeholders and actors to deliver on the objectives.

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(C) What to improve

(1) The report should reinforce the foresight element of what is meaningful to invest in now to achieve the vision that Europe has for the future of metrology research. It should clarify the long-term strategic objectives of this institutionalised partnership. It should explore how to best ensure integration of European metrology research in the long term, i.e. either a more centralised European approach or a decentralised network of Member States. The report could better explain how metrology research and cooperation relates to sector-specific research and the work of standardisation bodies.

(2) The report should be more transparent on the current situation of the metrology partnership under Horizon 2020. It should present an overview of relevant evaluation findings and explain how the key lessons learnt have been taken on board in the problem definition and in the proposed new partnership. It should clarify how the latter differs from the existing partnership.

(3) The report should better describe the baseline option and explain how it accounts for the costs of discontinuing the current partnership. The baseline should be the point of comparison against which all other options are assessed. It should thus consistently be scored as zero, while the scoring of the other options should be adjusted to reflect their impacts as compared to the baseline.

(4) The impact assessment should clarify to what extent and how the different options appeal to the main stakeholder groups whose voluntary participation is essential to success, as well as with policy-makers and regulators. The report should clarify what is known about different stakeholder groups' views on the various options.

(5) The report should be more transparent about what issues remain open after this impact assessment and will be decided at a later stage, because of the particularities of this exercise where some contextual elements (e.g. the budget) remain undecided.

(6) The report should better clarify the relationship between the objectives, the "expected impacts" and the "functionalities". Impacts should be assessed with respect to the specific objectives.

(7) The report should provide – as far as possible – quantified estimates of the cost of the different partnership types, to help readers compare the different options, notably on efficiency. The report should clarify why it considers the overall costs of the co-funded and institutionalised partnerships to be equal.

(D) Conclusion

The lead DG must revise the report in accordance with the Board's findings and resubmit it for a final RSB opinion.

Full title	**European Partnership on Metrology**
Reference number	PLAN/2019/5303
Submitted to RSB on	02/03/2020
Date of RSB meeting	25/03/2020