

Less than 5% of FP7 bioeconomy projects are ready to enter the market and trigger socio-economic impacts

Brussels, 29 June 2017 – An analysis by the Horizon 2020 ProBIO project has found that less than 5% of bioeconomy projects funded by the EU's 7th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP7) have results with the potential to be introduced to market. ProBIO has screened more than 400 projects funded by FP7's Knowledge-Based Bioeconomy (KBBE) Programme and found that whilst projects have supported the generation of new knowledge, few are close to being ready to cause widespread socio-economic impact through commercialisation.

"The ultimate aim of European research funding is to support economic growth and answer societal challenges, but this can only be achieved through the commercial application of research results. The low level of exploitable results is a result of how programmes are currently oriented, and the next European Framework Programme needs to be more forward-looking and better include commercialisation if we want to see these impacts," said Udo Sievers, from i.con innovation, a partner of the ProBIO project, during a Dinner Debate held on 28 June in the European Parliament.

The Debate, which was hosted by Lieve Wierinck MEP, Shadow Rapporteur on the European Parliament's mid-term assessment of Horizon 2020, gathered 60 representatives from the policy-making, research and industry communities to present ProBIO results and discuss how to increase impact from publicly funded research.

The common assumption is that the EU has excellent research, but it is not turned into market success only because Europe lacks entrepreneurial capacity and there is a 'knowhow gap' concerning the needs of commercial exploitation. However, ProBIO found that there are more complex, structural barriers behind the low commercial performance of European research programmes. These have taken a technology-push approach, thus ignoring market conditions, have not included enough commercially active partners, and have not provided full innovation process support.

Although both the Commission's interim review and the experiences of ProBIO partners have shown that Horizon 2020 is doing better than FP7 in supporting exploitation, there remains scope for improvement. The ProBIO project makes the following recommendations for the next European research framework programme:

- Foster more market driven research and innovation through substantially increased industry and SME participation;
- Base calls for proposals for applied research projects more on strategic research and innovation roadmaps, developed with SMEs and industry;
- Give more support for collaboration and demonstration;
- Provide staged funding programmes with a longer-term implementation perspective;
- Follow-up upon the impact of project results after the end of the grant agreement.

ENDS

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Notes for Editors

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