



**Ex-post impact evaluation and implementation  
monitoring of international networking schemes.  
Experiences of the ESF**

**Dr. Nina Kancewicz-Hoffman**, Secretary in the CEO Unit

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**ESF Member Organisations**



**77 in 30  
Countries:**

**Academies,  
Granting  
Agencies,  
Organisations  
of Institutes**



EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION

## ESF Mission Statement



The ESF provides a common platform for its Member Organisations in order to:

- ⇒ *Advance European research*
- ⇒ *Explore new directions for research at the European level*

Through its activities, the ESF serves the needs of the European research community in a global context.

## ESF scientific scope and structure



**ESF Instruments cover all research areas structured into 5 Standing Committees:**

- European Medical Research Councils (EMRC)
- Standing Committee for the Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences (LESC)
- Standing Committee for the Physical and Engineering Sciences (PESC)
- Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)
- Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS)

## ESF Networking Instruments - Format



### Exploratory Workshops

- Duration: 1-3 days
- Budget: max. 15 000€
- Participants: 25-30

### Scientific Networks (closed)

- Duration: up to 3 years
- Budget: about 30 000€ annually
- Activities: conferences, workshops, short visits

### Scientific (à la carte) Programmes

- Duration: 4-5 years
- Budget: 50 000 – 200 000€ annually
- Activities: conferences, workshops, training schools, short and exchange visits

## ESF Networking Instruments - Goals



- **Exploratory Workshops** aim to explore an emerging and/or innovative field of research or research infrastructure at a European level and should demonstrate the potential to open up new directions in research or new domains. They often initiate follow-up research activities and/or collaborative actions.
- **Networks** discuss, plan, innovate, analyse or co-ordinate research. They bring together scientists to explore the potential of developing and carrying out research at a European level. Very often, they give rise to other ESF activities. They concentrate on how expertise can be co-ordinated and developed effectively at a European level.
- **Programmes** are a networking activity bringing together nationally funded research projects at a larger scale in terms of duration, activities and budgets. They sometimes give rise to other activities, both within ESF and outside.

## Evaluation of the impact of ESF Networking Instruments



- Until 2004 no systematic evaluation of the impact of ESF actions
- Some Standing Committees undertook an ad hoc evaluation of the impact of some of their instruments
- Information on outcomes of individual projects presented in the ESF Annual Reports

## ESF Strategic Plan 2006-2010



- In 2004 ESF commissioned an external review of the impact of its Networking Instruments on European research as part of the preparation of its new Strategic Plan.
- The study by Technopolis Ltd / University of Twente team of consultants was submitted in summer 2005.
- Conclusions and recommendations of the study have been used in the work on the new Strategy and its implementation.
- ESF will conduct another independent review of its Instruments towards the end of the Plan period.

## Monitoring of implementation



### Exploratory Workshops

- A report of the scientific/strategic output of the workshop and statistical information on participants
- ESF Standing Committees delegate a representative to each workshop; the role of this 'rapporteur' is to feed back to the SC so that it can monitor and stimulate the follow-up (impact) of the workshop

### Scientific Programmes

- Mid-term report: half-way through the Programme
- Results of a mid-term evaluation are a basis for a decision on continuation of funding
- Final Report

## Monitoring of implementation



### Scientific Programmes (cont.)

- Each Committee has a slightly different procedure evaluating reports; in most cases reports are evaluated by external reviewer(s); some Committees invite a Chair of the Programme to present the report; other delegate a 'rapporteur' to discuss the report and the review with the Steering Committee of the Programme

### General framework

- Guidelines and format for reporting are provided
- Scientific reports are published on the ESF web site

**As a part of the implementation of its Strategy ESF will improve and harmonise monitoring procedures**

## Guidelines for reporting



### Content of a Programme Mid-term report

- Assessment of results achieved to date
- European 'added value' and visibility of the Programme achieved to date
- Programme finances and management - justification of unspent funds
- Publicity (Newsletters, website, etc.)
- Future Planning

## European Science Foundation



1 quai Lezay-Marnésia  
B.P. 90015  
67080 Strasbourg cedex  
France

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 76 71 00  
+33 (0)3 88 76 71 15 (direct)

Fax: +33 (0)3 88 36 69 45

Email: [nhoffman@esf.org](mailto:nhoffman@esf.org)

**[www.esf.org](http://www.esf.org)**