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Invitation to submit comments on a Swedish proposal for the next EU framework programme (registration number: U2010/5154/F)

1. Outline

The Swedish Forest Industries Federation has submitted the following viewpoints and proposals:

- collaboration between national research financiers, the private sector and the EU's programme should continue and be strengthened
- the Grand Challenges facing society are to be made into objectives for initiatives in future framework programmes for research, development and innovation
- the knowledge triangle of Research – Education – Innovation is to be integrated into the programme
- realisation
    - is to be based on the existing administrative system
    - simplification work is to be continued
    - technology platforms are to be used to a greater extent
    - the different instruments supporting research, development, education and innovation are to be coordinated and organised.

2. Background

More sustainable consumption of resources by society appears ever more necessary. This applies globally as well as nationally. A prerequisite for such a development is increased use of renewable resources. Forests will play a decisive role in the future. As Sweden is a heavily forested country for which forestry products have always been a cornerstone of the economy, the country is obviously affected by the changed views that characterise developments in society today. The country's large forestry assets provide good future prospects, not least due to forestry that has successively changed its

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husbandry measures in pace with new knowledge and understanding. Within this framework, natural values and biological diversity are being recreated. The reserve of biomass in Swedish forests is today greater than ever.

Urbanisation has increased demand for memorable and healthy recreation. The forest also has an increasing role to play in this context. A well-tended forest contains large ecological values. Forestry that ensures the supply of biomass at the same time as it safeguards and develops all other forest values can become a Swedish trademark.

Sweden has a strong tradition of research in the field of forest management and is world class in several areas. Continued successful Swedish forest management is not possible without strong research, which must form a more active part in innovative thinking. It must find new paths towards a changed production system and towards products containing higher values, have a strong customer perspective and, to a greater degree, contain socio-economic elements. The renewable resource constituted by forest can play a decisive role in solving the Grand Challenges and prove decisive in developing a new bioeconomy.

The forest-based industry in Sweden has given its full support to the vision that by 2030 :

- The European forest-based sector plays a key role in a sustainable society,
- it is a competitive, knowledge-based industry that fosters the extended use of renewable forest resources and
- the sector makes a considerable contribution to society in the context of a bio-based, customer-driven and globally competitive European economy.

The Swedish Forest Industries Federation has taken on a great responsibility for producing and rooting support for the forestry industry's R & D needs. In 2004, the work commenced through the formation of a European Technology Platform, namely the Forest-based sector Technology Platform, FTP. As a basis for the work conducted by FTP, a Strategic Research Agenda, SRA was produced. This has been developed further on a national basis and Sweden has a National Research Agenda, NRA. The Swedish NRA has been created in collaboration by the private sector, the research community and the public sector. It is continually followed up via the NRA Council with representatives from the sector as well as VINNOVA (Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems), Formas (the Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning), Energimyndigheten (the Swedish Energy Agency) and Mistra (the Foundation for Strategic Environmental Research). For further information, see www.nra-sweden.se.

The European involvement came about due to the interest and commitment that arose from the involvement in FP6. Swedish research groups became coordinators of several large projects due to industry support and Swedish public finance. This involvement has continued in the 7th framework programme

and the sector's involvement in research has been considerable. Sweden currently accounts for the Chairmanship of the High Level Group and the Deputy Chairmanship of the Advisory Committee of the FTP.

Collaboration via technology platforms has greatly simplified contact with the European Commission's constituent bodies and has thus enabled coordination of efforts.

3. Collaboration: EU – national funding – private sector

The Swedish Forest Industries Federation proposes that collaboration between national research funding, the private sector and the EU's programme for research, development, education and innovation be continued and strengthened.

There are several motives behind why it is important for the public sector to invest in long-term, strategic and internationally coordinated research and development with the private sector:

- Attract investment in research and development
- Create growth and employment
- Contribute to achieving ambitious public-sector objectives
- Develop knowledge
- Create the right conditions for innovation
- Provide access to R & D environments of global excellence.

4. Objective: the goal is to meet the Grand Challenges

The Swedish Forest Industries Federation proposes meeting the Grand Challenges be made the objective for initiatives in future framework programmes as well as for other initiatives connected to R & D and innovation.

Global warming – climate change

Sequester more carbon in products

By developing more materials that sequester carbon from renewable biomass, the emission of greenhouse gases can be reduced. This is an important stage in the transition from a fossil-fuel to a biofuel society. Sweden has excellent prerequisites for leading development and being able to produce replacements for fossil-based material and completely new types of functional material and products based on biomass. Several types of material can be developed on an ever increasing scale: building material, plastics and composites for multiple uses, carbon fibre, chemicals etc. In addition, Sweden has access to its large wooded areas that with increasing forest inventories sequester carbon.

The transition from fossil fuel to biofuel

Furthermore, Sweden has excellent prerequisites for being able to make the transition from fossil fuel to biofuel. Several such initiatives are already

underway; some are connected to the production of other products so that sub flows can form the basis for fuel for example. It is important that value adding measures are taken first and that the last use of the valuable raw material is as an energy product.

Tightening supplies of energy, water and food

Energy savings

As Sweden has advanced competencies in process engineering, the prerequisites are very good for innovations that provide further energy savings within the process industry. New technology and new energy-efficient products based on renewable material can become decisive in being able to fulfil the EU's goals for zero energy consumption in new housing.

Create more energy

More energy can also be extracted from sub flows of energy-rich material from the process industry. There is also great potential to utilise research, development and innovation to increase growth and thus increase extraction levels of forest material, for example.

Ageing societies

Tougher requirements for easily used and climate-smart products

Within packaging and hygiene there are excellent prerequisites for Sweden to develop smart, easily used products that suit an ageing population. Bio-based recyclable solutions in the form of new materials or bioenergy are, like sanitary articles that are solely based on biomass, a future vision.

Public health

By utilising smart packaging that enables new logistical solutions as well as lighter transportation (lower energy consumption), food and medicine can be distributed more safely and be less exposed to the spread of infection. Developing new combinations of material involving larger shares of renewable material will be a significant contribution to meeting the EU's sustainability goals.

Turning Europe into an eco-efficient economy

To sum up, a well-reasoned, increased use of renewable bio-based raw materials can contribute to turning Europe into a bioeconomy; that is a bio-based and eco-efficient economy. This can be achieved by making attractive, efficient and climate-smart solutions.

5. Objective: funds for the knowledge triangle, especially innovation

The Swedish Forest Industries Federation proposes that the knowledge triangle, Research – Education – Innovation, be integrated into FP8 and that thereby, the framework programme for research will be integrated with other relevant programmes to strengthen the triangle and create the conditions needed for a bio-based and eco-efficient economy.

The significance of a well-functioning knowledge triangle in the form of collaboration between education, research and innovation has been emphasised by the EU's leaders since 2006. It refers to the desirability of collaboration between education, research and innovation to create a European knowledge-based society that copes with global competition. For example, it is about modernising the universities. The knowledge triangle is also about the fact that we must stimulate innovation so that we can obtain more from the investments we make in research in the form of new products, processes and services that generate growth. A new strengthened innovation policy is required for the EU that:

- focuses on innovation aimed at achieving the goals in the Grand Challenges
- entails a new broad grip on the concept innovation
- involves all participants and all regions in the innovation process.

Accordingly, research and innovation needs to be integrated better into FP8 than FP7 and synergies with higher education have to be utilised. This manner of working strengthens the forest-based sector's possibilities of contributing to Europe's ability of meeting the Grand Challenges and transforming Europe into a bioeconomy.

6. Execution

The Swedish Forest Industries Federation proposes that the realisation of the next framework programme is primarily based on the existing administrative system, but that the simplification work be continued. The technology platforms should be used to a greater extent for formulating and handling a growing share of EU funds for research, development and innovation. The EU's various tools for supporting research, development, education and innovation should be better coordinated and organised than at present.

Cooperation programme: Reducing project grants and increasing programme grants is an urgent need. This can be achieved via functioning European Technology Platforms being given greater responsibility, for example through joint programming and specific PPP solutions. This proposal of increasing the importance of technology platforms in regard to innovation initiatives is a simple and easily achieved route for accelerating the production of innovations. Collaboration between funding providers and purchasers of the results increases the usability and usage of the results. It also provides added impetus to the innovation operation that everyone is asking for.

Thematic programme
There are good reasons for not breaking up the existing thematic structure too much and instead to utilise the competence and experience that has grown over time. However, with consideration for forest management's huge significance for Swedish and Finnish exports, we find, however, it very strange that this

industry is not mentioned when other less important industries such as fishing are. Our proposal is to structure and use less detail in the various thematic areas and to achieve visibility by using forestry or the forest based sector as headings in their own right.

ERA-Net and ERA-Net+
ERA-Net works extremely well for the small to medium-sized companies as the projects are normally smaller and easier to administer, as well as more closely rooted within the company than the larger research projects. ERA-Net should be strengthened through EU funding and be given opportunities to make permanent or at least temporarily extend initiatives (within the time frame of the framework programme, of course).

European Technology Platforms
As mentioned above the Swedish Forest Industries Federation is of the opinion that the system of technology platforms built up during the 7th framework programme should be used more intensively. The most developed technology platforms gather the public sector, researchers and the industrial operations of the sector in question. The proposals that have been made to integrate innovation in the technology platforms' operations have in many cases proved unnecessary. The aforementioned constellations provide the technology platforms with the most natural and simple way of connecting research and development with innovation. The coming framework programme should therefore assign the technology platforms a more central role and provide resources both for the realisation and for the handling of an increased share of the EU's support for research, development and innovation.

Yours sincerely

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The Swedish Forest Industries Federation