

COLLABORATIVE DOCTORAL PARTNERSHIPS – CALL 2020

THEMATIC FIELD 11: Synergies of qualitative and quantitative methods for anticipation activities

JRC RESEARCH AREA DESCRIPTION

The EU has long embraced the principle of evidence-based and future-proof policymaking. Foresight is a key approach to achieve this. Foresight methodologies are both quantitative and qualitative. While the former relies on the use of data forecasting and input-based economic and statistical models, the latter searches to explore and underpin the chain of systemic events and the process that might lead to potential futures and related implications for policy. In this context, bridging quantitative and qualitative methods and approaches is still a challenge to overcome, both scientifically and in practice for effective policy support.

On the one hand, many models use data-sets based on the assessment of operators in the field, who might be very well versed in the specificities of a given sector, but who might be unaware of contextual or systemic events that could have affected the selection and/or the magnitude of the model inputs. On the other hand, outcomes explored only via qualitative assessments can certainly benefit from a more precise quantification of the possible impacts they are trying to describe and capture.

Collaborative doctoral partnerships would, therefore, further explore and strengthen the bridging of qualitative and quantitative foresight approaches in terms of designing and applying specific methodologies and frameworks. By introducing foresight qualitative approaches to modelling, the candidate would highlight scientific and practical benefits to the policy cycle to gauge different possible scenarios, to improve the design of the model logic and to define the narrative surroundings the quantitative inputs/outputs.

MAIN POLICY FIELDS

At the European Commission, we have been applying foresight to inform and support policymaking since early 2000. Currently, unit JRC.I.2 manages the Competence Centre for Foresight (CC-F) and the Competence Centre for Modelling (CC-MOD).

The CC-F has established expertise in qualitative methods for anticipatory policy design. It has developed a number of collaborations with policy DGs (DG GROW, DG TAXUD, DG AGRI, DG CNECT, DG SANTE, etc.) during the evaluation of potential future political and societal landscapes. Current foresight exercises are essentially qualitative in nature and the CC-F practitioners utilise a number of tested methods and approaches, as recognised by the international foresight community.

The CC-MOD has broad expertise on quantitative modelling and supports the quality assurance process of JRC proprietary models, the revision of the better Regulations Toolbox as well as managing MIDAS the repository of all the models developed in the Commission. The Better Regulation guidelines set out the principles that the European Commission follows when preparing new initiatives and proposals and when managing and evaluating existing legislation.

Collaborative doctoral partnerships could therefore be envisaged in many different policy areas and in bridging qualitative and quantitative approaches.

LINKS / URL WEBSITES

- <http://midas.jrc.cec.eu.int>
- <http://www.timanalytics.eu/>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/luisa>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/research/crosscutting-activities/resilience>

LINKS / REFERENCES TO PUBLICATIONS

- <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/research/crosscutting-activities/resilience/reports>