

COOPERATION WORK PROGRAMME 2007¹

(European Commission: C(2007)560 of 26.02.07)

¹ In accordance with Articles 163 to 173 of the EC Treaty, and in particular Article 166(1) as contextualised in the following decisions: Decision 1982/2006/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18/12/2006 concerning the 7th Framework Programme of the European Community for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration (2007 – 2013) and the Council Decision 971/2006/CE of 19/12/2006 adopting a Specific Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration: 'Cooperation' (2007 – 2013).

Changes to the Cooperation Work Programme

This work programme is an update with respect to the provisional version adopted on the 21 December 2006. The majority of changes are minor typographical corrections. The more substantive modifications are listed at the start of each chapter of this work programme. There are no substantive changes to this general introduction section.

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i. General Introduction

This is the work programme for 2007 for the Cooperation Specific Programme of the 7th Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities.

The work programme was adopted by the Commission, with the assistance of the Programme Committee, following the adoption of the Specific Programme 'Cooperation' and the Rules for Participation and Dissemination.

This work programme provides additional detail of the implementation of the Specific Programme, setting out information on the priorities, objectives and policy relevance of the research topics which will be implemented through calls for proposals in 2007.

The Cooperation work programme is structured around 10 chapters, which set out the implementation of the research Themes. A range of issues of relevance to the Cooperation work programme as a whole are set out in Annexes 1-4. In general, each chapter is self-standing; however, applicants are advised to read this general introduction and the Annexes, in addition to the chapter(s) containing the research Theme(s) of interest.

In preparing this work programme, the Commission has relied on advice from a wide range of consultations, including from the European Technology Platforms² and from specific advice of a series of advisory groups³. The European Technology Platforms provide a framework for stakeholders, led by industry, to define research and development priorities, timeframes and action plans on a number of strategically important issues where achieving Europe's future growth, competitiveness and sustainability objectives is dependent upon major research and technological advances in the medium to long term. The advisory groups are groups of independent, high-level, experts which have been set up by the Commission to advise on the implementation of Community research policy in each of the ten research Themes contained in this work programme. The experts were chosen based on their knowledge, skills and significant experience in the field of research and aligned issues covered by the Themes. More information on the members, and the work, of the advisory groups as well as the European Technology Platforms can be found on the Europa and CORDIS websites.

In the implementation of the Cooperation Specific Programme, attention is also paid to the working conditions, transparency of recruitment processes, and career development as regards the researchers recruited on projects and programmes funded, for which the Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers offers a reference framework, while respecting its voluntary nature.

Scope of Work Programme

The scope of this work programme corresponds to that defined in the Cooperation Specific Programme. The calls for proposals planned within this work programme are those which are

² http://cordis.europa.eu/technology-platforms/home_en.html

³ http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/advisory_en.html

scheduled to be launched in 2007. In addition each of the Themes indicates potential topics for future calls.

Cross-Cutting Issues

There are several issues that are of importance to all Themes of the Cooperation Programme. These are addressed here and, as appropriate, elaborated further in the Themes and/or in the Annexes. The Cooperation Programme will contribute towards promoting growth, sustainable development and environmental protection, including addressing the problem of climate change.

Pluridisciplinary and Cross-Thematic Research, Including Joint Calls

Cross-Thematic and pluridisciplinary research areas are included in this work programme, paying particular attention to key scientific areas such as energy efficiency and marine sciences and technologies. Such cross-Thematic research areas are considered at the topic level, either by a centre of gravity approach with close cooperation of the Themes involved and with the topic presented in the most relevant Theme, or by consideration of the specific topic by both Themes. In certain fields of research, where it is clear that proposals will always contain a high proportion of interest for one of more Themes, there is the potential for joint, and/or coordinated, calls for proposals between one or more Themes to allow for a more focussed approach to such cross-Thematic or pluridisciplinary research areas.

Adaptation to Evolving Needs and Opportunities

The Cooperation Programme has been designed to be responsive to the changing and evolving research needs of European industry and policy makers. Each Theme includes a range of different research topics, including those relevant to industrial needs, such as those identified in the strategic research agenda for the Technology Platforms, and topics relevant to the formulation, implementation and assessment of EU policies and regulations. In addition, 'emerging' research needs are incorporated through more 'bottom-up' research topics. There is also provision for the inclusion of research topics related to 'unforeseen policy needs' which may require a quick reaction, as relevant.

Dissemination, Knowledge Transfer Broader Engagement and Gender

FP7 is working to develop a better relationship between scientists and European citizens. With this aim in mind, the work programme will encourage activities to promote greater public engagement and dialogue in order to involve citizens and civil society organisations in research and science policy.

The pursuit of scientific knowledge and its technical application towards society requires the talent, perspectives and insight that can only be assured by increasing diversity in the research workforce. Therefore, a balanced representation of women and men at all levels in research projects is encouraged. When human beings are involved as users, gender differences may exist. These will be addressed as an integral part of the research to ensure the highest level of scientific quality.

With the aim of encouraging young people's interest in science and science studies, account will be taken of the possible relevance of research results for the purposes of science education. Where appropriate, communication and dissemination strategies will address the wider audience of policy-makers, the media and the general public (including young people), in order to promote increased understanding between the scientific world and society at large.

In order to strengthen the diffusion and use of the output of EU research, the dissemination of knowledge and transfer of results, including to policy makers, will be supported in the Themes. In addition, CORDIS, a portal for 'Community Research and Development Information Service', which will provide services to foster the dissemination of knowledge and the exploitation of research results. The CORDIS portal will also provide applicants with full details of the calls for proposals open under this work programme, together with all of the documentation necessary to make an application.

Objectives related to gender, communication and dissemination will be addressed during the contract negotiation.

SME Participation

The participation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) is of particular importance in this work programme. A special emphasis has been placed on the participation of SMEs; indeed the aim will be to enable at least 15% of the funding of the Cooperation programme to go to SME participants. Specific research topics of particular interest for SMEs, or specifically targeted to SMEs are highlighted in each Theme, where relevant.

Ethical Aspects

All research carried out under this work programme must respect fundamental ethical principles, and the requirements set out in the text of the Cooperation Specific Programme. More information on the procedures for the peer review of submitted proposals is given in the 'Guidelines on Proposal Evaluation and Project Selection Procedures'.

The Commission is fully committed to the principles set out in the declaration on the use of human embryonic stem cells, as set out in the annex to the Commission Communication COM(2006)548 of 26 September 2006. This states that the Commission will maintain the practice of the Sixth Framework Programme. Accordingly, the Commission will not fund projects which include research activities which destroy human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent Community funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

Collaborative Research

This specific programme will support a range of research actions involving the active collaboration of research teams from all sectors, including industry, SMEs, universities and other higher education institutions, research institutes and centres, international European interest organisations, civil society organisations, and any other legal entities. These actions will

be implemented through the funding schemes: collaborative projects; networks of excellence, research for the benefit of specific groups (in particular SMEs) and coordination support actions.

Collaborative projects can range from small or medium-scale focused research actions, to large-scale integrating projects. When a distinction is made between these two types of projects, it will be based – unless specifically otherwise stated – on the size of the Community contribution requested. The related thresholds may vary for each Theme, and will be specified in the relevant parts of this work programme. It is important to note that these thresholds will constitute eligibility criteria. Additional qualitative aspects may also be given in the relevant parts of this work programme with respect to collaborative projects.

Researchers based in Associated States may take part in the cooperation programme on the same basis and with the same rights and obligations as those based in Member States.

Joint Technology Initiatives

The Cooperation Programme foresees support for Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs). The JTIs will cover fields of major European public interest, focussed on subjects identified through dialogue with industry, in particular with the European Technology Platforms. It is intended that the first legislative proposals for Joint Technology Initiatives will be presented in 2007. No funding for JTIs is included in the 2007 Cooperation work programme, although bridging measures are envisaged for a number of the potential JTIs to maintain momentum.

Coordination of non-Community Research Programmes

The coordination of non-Community research programmes is an important and integral part of the development of the European Research Area. This programme builds on the success of activities carried out in the Sixth Framework Programme. Actions foreseen in the Cooperation work programme will make use of two specific approaches – the ERA-NET scheme and the participation of the Community in jointly implemented national research programmes (through Article 169 of the Treaty).

Two different types of ERA-NET actions are foreseen in the Cooperation work programme. Where the actions are invited for topics falling within the scope of one of the Themes, the prescribed topics will be referred to under the Theme concerned and subsequent evaluations carried out under the theme's responsibility. Where, however, ERA-NET actions remain of a horizontal nature, or not directly linked to a Cooperation Theme, these will be evaluated and supported jointly across all of the Themes in as far as they have a sufficient European added value. Both types of actions (with few exceptions for certain topics, as indicated in Annex 4) will be invited through the same joint call. Further information on the horizontal ERA-NET activities is given in Annex 4 to this work programme; information on the Thematic ERA-NET activities called for in this work programme is given in the appropriate chapters and summarised in Annex 4.

Initiatives for the participation of the Community in the joint implementation of national research programmes are foreseen for the Cooperation work programme. These will be the subject of a separate decision on the basis of Article 169 of the Treaty. Further information on Article 169 activities are given either in the appropriate chapters of the work programme, where

relevant, or in Annex 4 for Article 169 initiatives of a horizontal nature or not directly linked to Cooperation Themes.

In addition, the Cooperation programme will also provide support to actions aiming at enhancing the complementarity and synergy between FP7 and ongoing cooperation initiatives (e.g. COST and EUREKA), other activities of intergovernmental research organisations, and networks and associations active at EU level. Further information on these activities is given in Annex 4 to this work programme.

International Cooperation

International cooperation represents an important dimension of all research activities carried out in the Cooperation programme. International cooperation in the research actions in the Cooperation Programme is implemented in the following two ways:

- Through the opening up of research activities to researchers and research organisations from all International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC) and from industrialised countries. There is provision for the financing of the participation of research partners from the ICPC countries from the FP7 budget. In some of the topics included in the programme, the participation of particular countries is particularly welcomed, in areas of mutual interest, and this is clearly stated in the topic description. This participation may also be implemented in the form of coordinated or joint calls;
- Through specific international cooperation actions (SICA) in each Theme, which are dedicated to third countries in specific topics of mutual interest. Such SICA topics are clearly identified in each Theme. It should be noted that specific participation criteria apply to Collaborative Projects for such topics (participation of a minimum of two Member States or Associated countries plus two targeted countries). Unless specifically stated, there are no such specific participation criteria for Coordination and Support Actions targeted at ICPC countries. However, depending on the nature and the expected impact of these actions, the participation of third countries in the projects could be considered essential. Further information on these criteria is given in each Theme and also in the relevant Guide for Applicants. A list of the International Cooperation Partner Countries is given in Annex 1.

Risk-Sharing Finance Facility

Improving access to loans for RTD actions requires public support to overcome market deficiencies for the financing of riskier European RTD actions. In accordance with Annex III of the Cooperation Specific Programme, the Community will provide a contribution to the European Investment Bank (EIB). This contribution will contribute to the Community's objective to foster private sector investment in research, technological development and demonstration (RTD) as well as innovation through a Community contribution to a Risk Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF), a financing instrument established by the European Investment Bank.

In compliance with the Cooperation Specific Programme "Joint Technology Initiatives, Collaborative Projects, Networks of Excellence and Research for the benefit of SMEs funded by the Community shall be automatically eligible to the RSFF provided their objectives fall within the scope of the contributing themes of this Specific Programme. Legal entities established in

third countries other than Associated Countries are also eligible if they participate in the above mentioned FP7 indirect actions and their costs are eligible for Community funding."

Further information on the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility is given in Annex 4 to this work programme.

Submitting a Proposal

Proposals should be submitted in accordance with the terms set out in a call for proposals. In order to submit a proposal, applicants should consult the following documents:

- The text of the call for proposals, as announced in the Official Journal of the European Union, and published on the webpage of the Theme concerned;
- This work programme; and
- The relevant Guide for Applicants

There are also a number of other useful texts, which applicants could refer to, including the Specific Programme 'Cooperation', Rules for Participation for FP7, the Guidelines on Proposal Evaluation and Project Selection Procedures, and the Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These documents, and other relevant background documents, are available on the CORDIS website.

Every Member State and Associated State has appointed a set of National Contact Points (NCPs) to assist potential and successful applicants. . There is a NCP for each of the Themes of the Cooperation Programme. Applicants are encouraged to make contact with the relevant NCP from their country.

Evaluation Criteria and Related Issues

The 'Rules on Submission of Proposals and the Related Evaluation, Selection and Award Procedures' set out the basic procedures to be followed by all programmes under the 7th Framework Programme.

The set of eligibility and evaluation criteria for this work programme is given in Annex 2. Any complementary criteria, which may apply, are clearly set out in the relevant chapter of this work programme.

All proposals which deal with ethical issues and all proposals for which ethical concerns have been identified during the evaluation process may be reviewed by a separate ethical evaluation panel, before they can be selected for funding. Further information on this ethical review and all aspects of the evaluation procedure are given in the 'Rules on Submission of Proposals and the Related Evaluation, Selection and Award Procedures'.

The work programmes, and consequently the calls for proposals, may specify and restrict the participation of legal entities, according to their activity and type, or according to the funding scheme used.

Calls for proposals may involve a two-stage submission and/or a two-step evaluation procedure. When such a procedure is employed, this is clearly stated in the call for proposals and the Guides for Applicants. More information on two-stage submission and two-step evaluation is given in the 'Rules on Submission of Proposals and the Related Evaluation, Selection and Award Procedures'.

In carrying out the evaluations of proposals received, the Commission may choose to send the proposals to external experts, or to make the proposals available electronically, so that the experts may carry out their examination and review of the proposals at their home and/or their place of work.