FP7-ICT-2013-10

Frequently asked questions (version 1; 10th July 2012)

All the documents referred to here are obtained by following links from the Participant Portal or the ICT web site at http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ict/

How does the ICT Theme offer funding?
We do so only by a series of public calls for proposals. In our Workprogramme we announce what sort of projects we are interested in, and (usually) give a fixed deadline in which proposals must be received. This way, everybody knows what the possibilities are, and everybody gets an equal chance.

How do I find out what sort of work the ICT Theme will help to fund?
You must read the current ICT Workprogramme. This describes in detail the research objectives which we are defining for this call, and the types of projects which can be proposed in each objective.

What are these types of project?
We fund research by two means; the **Large-scale integrating project IP** and the **Small and medium-scale focused research project STREP**. An IP is intended to be broader in scope and ambition than a STREP. *(These two types of action are also collectively called Collaborative projects CP in some of our documents).*
We can provide funds for coordinating existing research projects - either just ICT projects or including other projects also - in order to increase their benefit or impact. This is done by means of a **Coordination action CA**.
Other work in support of the ICT Theme can be funded by a **Support action SA.** *(Coordination actions and Support actions are collectively called Coordination and Support Actions CSA in some of our documents).*
We also have in this call a special combined project type called **Collaborative project – Coordination and Support action** (CP-CSA) designed to support pre-commercial procurement by public bodies**.**
Fuller details of all these types of project are given in the Guides for applicants, which can be downloaded via the Participant Portal. There is a separate Guide for applicants for each type of project.

Can I propose any of these types of project for any of the objectives in this call?
No. Each objective has specified a <u>particular range</u> of project types it is calling for. They are described in the ICT Workprogramme and listed on the Call fiche.

What if I send you a proposal for an IP, say, for an objective which is only calling for CA and SA proposals?
We will reject it without evaluation, as being out of scope of the call.

Can I send you a proposal for work, which includes more than one of your objectives. Or maybe even objectives of other FP7 Themes such as Health or Transport?
Yes, you may submit a cross-objective proposal. But to be evaluated for this call the centre of gravity of the proposal must lie in one of the objectives open in this call. If the centre of gravity of your proposal lies in another Theme's call you should submit it to that other Theme. If we receive a proposal where the centre of gravity lies in another Theme's call which is currently open, we will transfer it to them. If the centre of gravity of your proposal lies in an objective which is not covered by any available open call, we will reject it without evaluation.

What if I send you a "spontaneous" proposal for work in an area not mentioned in this call?
We will reject it without evaluation, as being out of scope of the call.

How do I find out how to write a proposal?
Full details of how to prepare a proposal are given in the **ICT Guides for applicants**, obtainable from the Participant Portal. There are five Guides, one for each project type - IP, STREP, CA, SA, CP-CSA - because the required structure of the proposal is different for each project type.
Remember, just because we have provided five Guides does not mean that all five project types will be possible in the objective which you are targeting. Check the ICT Workprogramme for your objective before preparing your proposal, to be sure that such a project type is indeed being called for!

I see nine Guides for applicants on your call page, not five!
We include in this call objectives from our FET Proactive initiative. These objectives are asking for IP, STREP, CA or SA proposals, but they have certain special conditions in their evaluation which are different from the rest of the call (described in the Appendix 5 of the ICT Workprogramme). So we have produced four extra "FET Proactive only" Guides, just for proposers in these objectives.

Is there an upper limit to the amount of funding I can request for a STREP proposal?
No. In ICT we do not distinguish between STREP proposals and IP proposals by the amount of funding requested.

Where do I list my "Other costs" in a STREP proposal?
STREPs in the ICT Theme do not include a cost category "Other". Dissemination activities (normally foreseen in a STREP project) may be classified under "Management". Activities such as IPR protection or the preparation of an exploitation plan are also classified under "Management". Other activities such as training, coordination activities with other research projects or the commercial exploitation of results cannot be funded in a STREP project.

I have heard that I need some sort of proposer identity number before I can prepare a proposal
Yes. We have indeed introduced a system of Participant Identification Codes, in which you register your address and organisational details with us, then you are given a code number which you can use to identify yourself each time you submit a proposal. This is to save you

from having to supply all the same information again and again. There is more information about this in the Guides for applicants.

How do I submit my proposal?
You use the submission service which is integrated in the Participant Portal website which we use to publicise the call (Participant Portal Submission Service PPSS). The proposal coordinator first need to register, to get a password or passwords for him/herself and the consortium partners (these passwords protect the confidentiality of your proposal file while you are preparing it). Then you prepare your proposal via the Internet on our server, then finally you submit it. How to do this is briefly explained in the Guides for applicants, and there is also a more detailed manual for the PPSS which you will be able to download.

What should I be aware of when using electronic submission?
Three key issues:
1. Make sure you have registered for the right call, **FP7-ICT-2013-10**. Registering for the wrong call will mean that we do not receive your proposal.
And also make sure that you have selected your intended project type. Registering for the wrong project type will mean that you will be working with a wrong set of forms and instructions.
2. You must remember that, even though you are building up your proposal on our computer, it will not be recognised as a completed proposal ready for submission until the proposal coordinator presses the "Submit" button and completes the submission procedure. So don't forget to press the "Submit" button !
3. After submitting it is still possible to see your submitted proposal in the system. So submit in good time, then check that it is indeed the proposal version you intended, and that it is complete, printable and readable (and not password protected). After the call deadline it is not possible to replace any section of your proposal which is missing or unreadable.

What if I find I have registered for the wrong call or for the wrong type of project by mistake?
Abandon that proposal and register again.

What if I have some difficulties, and I am a few minutes late with my proposal. Can I still submit it via the Participant Portal?
No. The submission service for this call will shut down automatically on the call deadline.

What if I am still uploading my proposal when the deadline comes? Submission is when you have uploaded the whole proposal **and** you have submitted it by pressing the submit button and carrying out the subsequent submission steps. If your file is still uploading when the deadline comes, you have failed to submit it.

Can I send you my proposal by email?
Proposals sent by email (or fax) are excluded by the legal conditions of the call and will be rejected without evaluation.

Call deadlines have sometimes been extended. Will this one be extended?
We have in the past extended a call deadline when a failure in the submission system has meant that applicants were unable to submit their proposal. In the event of a failure of the service due to breakdown of the Commission server during the last 24 hours of this call, the deadline will be extended by a further 24 hours. This will be notified by email to all proposal coordinators who had registered for this call by the time of the original deadline, and also by a notice on the Participant Portal. But such a failure is a rare and exceptional event, therefore do

not assume that there will be an extension to this call!

If you have difficulty in submitting your proposal you must not assume that it is because of a problem with the Commission server, as this is rarely the case. Immediately contact the PPSS helpdesk for assistance:

tel: +32 2 299 2222;   email DIGIT-EFP7-SEPSUPPORT@ec.europa.eu

How will I know you have received my proposal?

When you submit your proposal via the submission service you will see a pop-up message saying that a proposal has been submitted. We strongly suggest that, as soon as your proposal is in complete form, you submit it. This will reassure you that all is well with your submission procedure. Then you can continue to work on your proposal, and re-submit it each time you have a better version. Each new submission will over-write the old one.

But make a trial submission! If you are going to have a technical problem, it is better to discover this while there is plenty of time to call the helpdesk and fix it, and not just a few minutes before the deadline.

Is this automatic message my Acknowledgement of Receipt (AoR)?

No. The day after the close of call, we will download all the proposals from the Commission server and an official Acknowledgement of receipt letter will be sent by email to each proposal coordinator (the individual named as "person in charge" on the A2 form of participant no. 1).

What if I don't get my Acknowledgement of receipt after the close of the call?

The sending of the AoR is entirely automated. There are only four possible reasons for not getting one:

- You did not press the submit button and complete the subsequent steps for your proposal before the call closed. This means you have failed to submit a proposal so there is no Acknowledgement of receipt
- You are not the individual named as "person in charge" on the A2 form of participant no. 1. You should contact that person for the AoR
- You are that person, but you did not give a correct email address for yourself. Contact the ICT programme at ict@ec.europa.eu to get your AoR and to correct your address
- You are that person, and you did give a correct email address, but your organisation's spam filter eliminated our email to you. Check your spam filter for the day or two after the close of the call. Then if you do not find your AoR, contact the ICT programme.

As a proposal coordinator, can I delegate the job of submitting my proposal?

The proposal is submitted under the ECAS password of the proposal coordinator. Another contact can be added within the coordinator partner, who will also have access to the proposal. So a proposal coordinator can pass this job to someone else by adding a new contact. But this is a risky thing to do. The submission of a proposal requires knowledge of the submission system, a detailed knowledge of the contents of the proposal and the authority to make last-minute decisions on behalf of the consortium if problems arise. It is very unwise to delegate this job!

Do I have to follow exactly the format for a proposal, which you give in the Guide for applicants and the proposal template obtained from the submission service?

Yes you do. The format takes you through, section by section, the information on which your proposal will be evaluated. If you write it in some other way, or fail to supply some of the data, you risk omitting information which is needed in the evaluation, and this will lead to lower scores, or failure.

Do I have to write parts of my proposal in an "anonymous" way, as you have requested in some calls?
No, not in this call.

Can my organisation be involved in more than one proposal in this call?
Yes it can, but beware of spreading your effort too thinly. You are more likely to be successful by putting a substantial effort into one proposal than in making a sub-standard contribution to several.

Do projects have to be proposed by a multinational consortium?
Normally yes. We expect ICT projects will be multinational in scope and ambition. If you plan research which involves only your own national goals, and includes only organisations from your own country, then it is to your own national government that you should turn for support.

What is the minimum consortium requirement in a proposal?
Your proposal must contain at least a minimum of three mutually independent participants who are in three different EU Member states or FP7 Associated countries.
The EU Member states are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK.
The latest list of Associated countries is given in the Guides for applicants.
Note also there is also a special condition for CP-CSA proposals, which require the participation of public bodies in the consortium.

Are there any exceptions to the "three countries" rule?
These conditions do not apply to **Support action** *SA* proposals. Exceptionally, proposals for Support actions may come from any number of participants, including just one, from any country.

Can we include participants from countries other than the Member and Associated countries ?
Yes. For any proposal, when the minimum figures mentioned above are achieved, you may then add further participants from any other country in the world.

Do the partners which I include from other countries get funding?
If their country is on our list of International Co-operation Partner Countries (ICPC), they will get funding also. This list is published in Annex 1 of the Cooperation Workprogramme, but in general it includes all the other countries in Europe, and the developing countries elsewhere in the world.

Are the participants from these other countries funded to the same level as the EU state and Associated country participants in a project?
Organisations in ICPC countries can choose one of two methods of funding. They can participate using the normal ("eligible cost") method used by EU organisations, and in this case they are funded on the same basis and to the same levels as an organisation in an EU Member state. Alternatively, an organisation in an ICPC country can opt for "lump sum" funding. This is an option which is only open to them. There is more information about this in the Guides for applicants.

What about overseas countries not on the ICPC list?

Organisations from the industrialised overseas countries, which are not on the ICPC list (main examples are the USA, Canada, Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Australia, ...) may also participate in any FP7 project, but whether they are funded or not is subject to a series of conditions listed in the FP7 Rules for participation.

How can I find possible partners in other EU states and Associated countries?
Get in touch with your ICT National Contact Point
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ncp_en.html
Use the Idealist service partner search service t
http://www.ideal-ist.net

Do I have to notify you in advance that I am planning to submit a proposal?
When you apply for your Participant Portal Submission Service password you will be asked for some basic information about your proposal. This is of enormous assistance to us in planning for the evaluation. Please complete as much information as you can, even with only preliminary data – nothing you say at this point involves you in any commitment.

When writing my proposal, can I use a different proposal name from the one I originally registered with the submission service; can change the partnership I originally identified?
Yes; you can revise the details of your proposal as you develop your ideas. For the evaluation we will only take into account the information you give in your final proposal submission.

Can you give me any sort of preliminary feedback on my proposal idea, before I do all the work involved in preparing a proposal?
You can get in touch with the Commission contact person for the objective you are interested in, and discuss your ideas with him/her, and get their informal advice. Their contact details are available from the ICT call page ("European Commission contacts for this call"). Also, for all of the objectives in this call there is a pre-proposal check service. Details about this service are given in the Guides for applicants.
In either case, it is wise to do these checks before committing yourself to serious effort in proposal preparation.

Is there anything else I should do when preparing my proposal?
Yes. Prepare and sign with your partners a Consortium agreement, dealing with the relations between the partners and the means of settling disputes once the project is running etc. You have to establish a consortium agreement before the work starts, so the sooner the better. We do not need to examine the Consortium agreement and we do not interfere in it, but we do need to be assured that such an agreement has been made.

Does the Commission offer a model Consortium agreement?
No. But we do offer advice on what main points the agreement should include, in a
Consortium agreement checklist available via the Participant Portal.

How does the Commission evaluate the proposals which it receives?
The Commission evaluates the proposal by using teams of experienced independent experts specially selected for this task.

Are all received proposals evaluated?
All proposals are first checked for eligibility, as only eligible proposals will be evaluated. There are four eligibility criteria in this call
   • The proposal must have the necessary minimum number of multinational participants

- The proposal must address an objective which is open in the call
- The proposal must be complete (it should contain two parts - see the Guides for applicants)
- The proposal must have been submitted before or at the call deadline via the Participant Portal

Proposals that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be rejected without evaluation.

How do the independent experts evaluate my proposal?
They assess it on three criteria covering Scientific and technical quality, Project implementation and Potential impact. They give each proposal a score out of 5 on each of these criteria, and an overall score is calculated by simple addition; this is therefore out of 15. *(A weighting scheme is used in the calculation of the overall score for FET Proactive proposals only. See the ICT Workprogramme Appendix 5)*

Where can I see the evaluation criteria?
They are described in an annex to the ICT Workprogramme and also in the Guides for applicants. When you have a first draft of your proposal, we strongly advise that you give it to trusted colleagues and ask them to evaluate it using the procedures explained in the Guides and the example evaluation forms which are available from our call page. Then improve your proposal based on their recommendations.

What are the threshold scores?
Each of the criteria has a threshold score of 3, which a proposal must reach in order to be considered. There is also a threshold on the overall score of 10. Proposals which fail to reach these thresholds are not considered for funding. *(Different thresholds apply for FET Proactive proposals. See the ICT Workprogramme Appendix 5)*

Are all the proposals which pass the evaluation thresholds funded?
No. Many more proposals pass the evaluation thresholds than we have the budget to support. The evaluators use the scores which they have given to list the proposal in priority order, and the Commission uses this list, and other advice which the evaluators give in their written reports, to guide its selection of proposals for funding.

How will I know the results of the evaluation of my proposal?
After the evaluation is completed, every proposal co-ordinator (the individual named as "person in charge" on the A2 form of participant no. 1) will receive by email an "Evaluation Summary Report" (ESR), which details the evaluators' findings about their proposal.

And how will I know if my project will be funded?
If your proposal did not pass the thresholds (or was excluded from evaluation on eligibility grounds) you will be able to see this immediately from your ESR. If your proposal has passed all the evaluation thresholds you will be notified a few weeks after receiving the ESR either that:
- you are now invited to negotiate a grant agreement
- your proposal has been placed on the reserve list (this is in case budget becomes available for you due to other negotiations failing, or being agreed at lower-than-expected costs)
- your proposal was ranked too low to be considered for funding.

Can I myself apply to work as an expert in an evaluation? Even if I am not an EU citizen?

Yes and Yes! We constantly need good experts with experience in information and communication technology (and a good knowledge of English, which is the working language in the evaluation). Apply at https://cordis.europa.eu/emmfp7 . If selected to assist in an evaluation you will be asked to sign a conflict of interest declaration, so that of course you are never involved in the evaluation of one of your own proposals or of proposals competing with it.

Where can I get more help with my proposal?
If you are planning a proposal, you should at once get in touch with your ICT National Contact Point, whom you can identify at http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ncp_en.html. He or she can give you an enormous amount of help.
If you have specific questions about proposing to this call, contact the ICT help desk at ict@ec.europa.eu
If you have technical questions about the contents of any of the objectives open in the current call, a list of European Commission contacts who can advise you is available from the Participant Portal.
If you have general questions about FP7, contact the FP7 Information desk http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=enquiries

If you have problems with submission, immediately contact the submission service helpdesk   tel: +32 2 299 2222; email DIGIT-EFP7-SEPSUPPORT@ec.europa.eu

A final piece of advice?
Always after each call we are contacted by a small number of applicants who failed to submit a proposal.
- Some submitted the wrong file under the stress of working up to the last minute.
- Some were blocked by verification problems after they pressed the submit button. The submission service does not allow you to submit a proposal with significant missing data, over 10 Mbytes in size or containing viruses.
- Some were blocked by technical difficulties. The Helpdesk can solve most technical problems in a matter of minutes, but there are applicants who leave themselves only seconds.
- Some were still uploading when the deadline passed, and tell us that the communications link was unusually slow that day, their file took a long time to convert to pdf, they had a power cut at the last minute etc. This might be true, but it is entirely your responsibility to arrange yourself to submit your proposal in time. *Except for recognised problems on the Commission's server, no other excuses or extenuating circumstances are ever taken into account.*

Make a first submission of your proposal some days in advance of the deadline, you may continue to submit improved versions. Make the final submission in good time, then download what you submitted to make sure it is indeed what you intended to submit.

Never leave your submission until the last hour of the call !

If I have other questions on the rules for FP7 projects?
Contact the FP7 Information desk

http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm?pg=enquiries