

CAPACITIES RESEARCH POTENTIAL



Trans-national cooperation among Research Potential NCPs

*Strengthening research capacities in
convergence/outermost regions of the EU*

Grant Agreement: FP7-203926

**Frequently Asked Questions
CALL 2010**

- **Section 1: Participation in the Research Potential programme**

If a company is interested to participate in the Research Potential programme, are there any specific requirements? For example, should the company spend a particular % of its budget on research?

Any company, university, research centre, organisation or individual, legally established in any country, may participate in a collaborative project (known as an indirect action) provided that the minimum conditions laid down in the Rules for Participation in FP7 (RFP), Chapter II, Section 1, p.12, have been met, including any additional conditions laid down by specific programmes or individual work programmes (see Article 12 of RFP).

There is no requirement related to the company's budget on research. However, the company will have to prove its commitment to research, its research excellence, related activities, etc.

Can different teams from the same university department submit more than one proposal under the call REGPOT-2010-1?

Proposals are submitted by any public or private research entity (as a single proposer) established in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions of significant size, with at least 10 permanent experienced researchers, such as University Department, Faculty, etc.

More proposals from the same University Department are eligible, but not recommended if the size of each research team is not significant.

Can 2 different laboratories from the same research institution submit a joint proposal under the call 2010?

The purpose of the REGPOT-2010-1 call is not to encourage several small research legal entities to set up 'consortia' in order to increase their respective size to receive support. In order to increase the Research Potential's impact, the 2010 Work Programme targets the existing excellent research entities of significant size. In the case, for example, a University Department is composed by 4-5 laboratories/teams, ideally all of them should be part of a given proposal. If some Departments are of too much important size with 'dispersed' (scientifically speaking) research teams, it's still possible that part of these laboratories/teams participate in a proposal structured around a precise scientific topic/thematic.

The single proposer needs to be of significant size, with at least 10 permanent experienced researchers. Is there a specific type of contract needed to verify the "permanent" position of the researchers?

The type of contract depends on the policy of each organisation. What is important is to verify that the researchers are working in the core team of the proposer organisation, they have sufficient knowledge and experience to perform research productively and are committed to the organisation. The permanent researchers should not include students under doctoral studies, visiting researchers, or technical staff.

When a researcher is characterised "experienced"? Is there a minimum number of years in research needed?

In REGPOT programme, there is no such limit. The experience needed may differ depending on the scientific field, etc. The "experience" refers to the researcher's ability to perform research, her/his achievements and skills and how these are

tailored to the organisation's needs, etc. Detailed description of their profile should be given in the proposal. Additionally, information should be provided about their type of contract, duration, tasks and impact on increase of the institution's research capacity and capability.

Is it possible for other actors (regional authorities, etc.) to participate in the Steering Committee of the project and be reimbursed for that?

Yes, this is strongly recommended. Participation travel expenses and accommodation might be foreseen in the budget when applicable.

Individual researchers from other organisations than the applicant can be included in the proposal? Are there any preconditions for their participation (ex.: standard collaboration, visiting professor, etc)?

If they are not permanent staff of the applicant legal entity they may be entitled to participate through partnering organisations. They can also be invited in the thematic workshops, give advice in the Steering Committee, etc.

Regional stakeholders and/or end users can participate actively in the project (not just in the Steering Committee)?

The proposal is mono-applicant and therefore other legal entities or stakeholders can not be contractors. We can add that regional and other stakeholders may however participate in a project on a case by case basis and in tasks which will fully demonstrate their participation added-value for the project's success.

What types of costs are covered for regional stakeholders/end users participating in the project?

This depends on their contribution in the proposal, usually travelling and accommodations expenses for participation to meetings.

The organisations that have already been funded under previous REGPOT calls are eligible to resubmit a proposal?

The organisations can submit proposals in the new call. However, if there is an ongoing project, the SWOT analysis/Action Plan is still ongoing and the results are not already achieved and presented. Therefore, it will be difficult to provide a well justified new SWOT/Action Plan for the next steps.

- **Section 2: Topics**

An applicant that is excellent in e.g. "Socio-economic sciences and Humanities" wants to apply in REGPOT-2010. Should he check if the SSH Work Programme 2010 includes a call related to her/his particular interest, or he can apply irrespectively of the current calls?

The applicant's domain should be eligible under the EC FP7 irrespectively of whether he wishes to submit a proposal to an ongoing call. It is important that the applicant provides worth information of her/his research excellence.

Theoretic mathematics is not a thematic priority (as per Specific Programme "Cooperation"). Is it eligible for Research Potential?

Mathematics is an eligible domain under EC FP7 and therefore for REGPOT. Please note that all EC FP7 thematic topics are eligible under REGPOT-2010 calls.

- **Section 3: Exchange of know-how/experience**

Who is financing the seconded research staff which is sent to a partner organisation, the selected centre, or the host institute?

The 'host institution' does not receive any budget for seconded research staff so related expenses are covered by the project coordinator.

What types of costs are covered for the seconded staff?

Neither salaries nor complements of salaries for seconded staff will be covered by the Commission under this activity. However, as a general rule, costs related to travel, accommodation and any other expenses related to the seconded staff stay abroad, excluding funding of joint research, could be eligible costs. It should be also stressed that every reimbursement as regards staff and living costs will be according to the practice in each country and individual institution. Appropriate justification for these activities should be provided under the relevant Work package of part B of the proposal.

What are the qualifications of research seconded staff under the "exchange of know-how and experience"?

Both junior and senior researchers can participate in the exchange of know-how and experience. Return mechanisms for the seconded staff originating from the selected centres in the qualifying regions are obligatory.

Are exchange of know-how and experience with a more experienced research organisation in the same country eligible?

In addition to the three partnering organization required by the call, development of partnership with local research entities can be foreseen. These national research entities have to fulfil the conditions related to the partnering organisations as stipulated in the Work Programme and the partnership should really contribute to the increase of the research capacity of the applicant. As for all other partnering organisations part of the budget can be foreseen for secondments, participation to common meetings for specific purposes, participation in workshops and conferences organized by the applicant or in other dissemination activities.

What is the average number of partnering organisations for the exchange of know-how and experience?

No average number is included in the Work Programme. However, there should be 3 or more knowledgeable and experienced partner organisations.

Do I have to describe the objectives and content of the work to be undertaken during secondments?

Yes, as well as the duration, expected results and timing of each secondment.

• **Section 4: Recruitment of experienced researchers**

What type of contracts is envisaged in relation to the recruitment of incoming experienced researchers?

As regard the recruitment, long-term contracts or permanent positions are desirable. However, the number, type of experience and type of contract for the experienced researchers are self-tailored, depending on the proposer's needs. Their salaries for the whole period of the project are eligible expenses under this call.

What might be the utmost Commission's contribution for the recruitment of researchers?

Up to 100% of the total cost per incoming researcher. The cost is related to the level of competence of the incoming researcher and should be justified by the applicant. The applicant should estimate such costs according to its own rules and procedures.

What is the definition of "incoming researcher"?

"Incoming" refers to researchers that usually come from another country (Europe or third country), in which they have been professionally active during recent period. Return of nationals that have left the country is encouraged.

The recruitment of enthusiastic and open minded graduate students (PhD, MS) also greatly contributes to scientific potential of a research institution; it is also efficient in economic wise. Is it possible to support such young researchers either by recruiting or by scholarships?

No, it is not.

Is it possible to recruit experienced researchers that are already working in the convergence region, but for less than a year (are they still considered as "incoming")?

Yes.

Do I have to describe the research work to be undertaken by the experienced incoming researchers to be hired?

Yes and also to clearly explain how the experienced incoming researchers will contribute to the applicant's research potential increase. Keep in mind that funding of research work is not eligible under this call.

• **Section 5: Equipment**

The cost of equipment should be up to 30% of the total budget, or of the EC contribution?

As indicated in the WP, this applies to the total project budget.

In the activity "acquisition, development or upgrading of research equipment", the installation costs are eligible?

Installation – setup costs, consumable materials to maintain equipment, building costs (if additional space is required to install the equipment) that are required to run the equipment properly are eligible. These costs should be duly justified.

Is it possible for the selected organization to purchase equipment and install it in the premises of another organization, if the venue is more appropriate for measurements, etc?

The equipment should be installed and entirely used in the premises of the applicant legal entity. If such equipment is to be partially used for any other purpose that the applicant's potential increase in RTD, this should be clearly indicated in the proposal.

How we should estimate the depreciation for equipment?

The calculation of the depreciated value for equipment should be based on the participant's/beneficiary's usual practice for depreciation. Equipment depreciation must be in accordance with the usual accounting and management principles and practices of the participant, Article 31 of the FP7 Rules for Participation (and assuming that they meet recognised standards) and not be created purely for the EC project. Please beware that equipment costs are only eligible for the MPC partners.

• **Section 6: Evaluation Facility**

In case and organisation opts for the "evaluation facility" and the project is extended to 42 months, the other activities are also extended?

In this context, the management activities will be extended to the total duration of the project. It is possible to extend with up to 6 months also the dissemination work package but only with activities related to the evaluation facility. All other activities should be finalised in 36 months.

What are the main characteristics of the evaluation facility?

The evaluation facility is foreseen to take place after the end of the implementation of the project for 6 months or less in order to evaluate the applicant's overall research quality and capability (including management and infrastructure).

4-6 experts appointed by the Commission will visit the applicant institution to discuss with the researchers and the research management in order to evaluate the capacity of the applicant to handle its objectives with the means available in situ and the perspectives to maintain or to increase the applicant's research capacity and the means necessary for this purpose. A discussion with the Steering Committee can be crucial to finalise the recommendations.

From the budget point of view the applicant should take into account: one visit/expert of 4-5 days, a second visit/expert of 3-4 days, 4 additional days/expert to work on the report, 1 meeting with the Steering Committee and any other means which might seem appropriate for this end and without exceeding the 150000 EUR limit for this work package.

For the experts a fee of 450 EUR/day should be calculated, as well as the accommodation and travel costs.

As this work package is not a mandatory activity the added value of the evaluation should be explained. If the proposer does not want to include this facility a justification is not needed.

If an organisation will apply for the evaluation facility the duration of the project is extended with 6 months (e.g. to 3.5 years if the project is foreseen for 3 years). In this context, the management activities will be extended to the total duration of the project. It is possible to extend with up to 6 months also the dissemination work package but only with activities related to the evaluation.

• Section 7: Other Financial issues

If the project's budget is much less than the "ceiling" of 4 million euro, the evaluation will be less favourable?

The budget depends on the needs/profile of each particular organisation and should be realistic, feasible and reasoned accordingly. The budget's size should correspond to the Action Plan and this will be analyzed during the scientific evaluation.

Can tasks be sub-contracted?

As a general rule contractors must have the capacity to carry out the work themselves. Subcontracting is derogation to this general rule and is limited to specific cases. Beneficiaries may subcontract other minor services and supplies, which do not represent core elements of the project work, which cannot be directly assumed by them and where this proves necessary for the performance of their work under the project.

Conditions related to activities subcontracted:

- Subcontracts may only cover the execution of a limited part of the project (Article II.7 of Annex II of the FP7 model grant agreement). Therefore, generally core elements of the project can not be subcontracted. Coordination tasks of the coordinator such as the distribution of funds, the review of reports and other tasks mentioned under Article II.2.3 to GA cannot be subcontracted;
- Article II.7 of the FP7 model contract stipulates that: "recourse to the award of subcontracts must be duly justified in Annex I having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation";
- Even though certain services may be performed by a subcontractor, the beneficiary maintains full responsibility for carrying out the project, retains the intellectual property generated, if any, and must ensure that certain of provisions of the model contract are reflected in the agreement with the subcontractor. (Article II.7 of the FP7 model contract). For more information on subcontracting please consult: • Model Grant Agreement, Annex II: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls-grant-agreement_en.html

Is it possible to fund education activities issues under Research Potential?

No, Research Potential addresses only research related capacity building.

• Section 6: Application procedure

For the SWOT analysis mentioned in the Work Programme, the proposers should use a specific "format", or they can just describe the issues in free text?

There is no specific template, but all 4 issues of the SWOT have to be covered. The applicants should present a clear and detailed analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the applicant research entity. This SWOT analysis should be the basis of the preparation of the Action Plan composed by a coherent set of measures indicated in the Work Programme.

Is it possible to include in the Annex an evaluation of the organization already developed by external experts?

Yes, it is.

The section "Consortium as whole" should not be filled in, since there is no consortium?

The identified knowledgeable and experienced partnering organizations should be described either in this part of the proposal or in the work packages within the description of work. A short description of their experience and knowledge should be given in the proposal.

Activity code is REGPOT-2010-1. The related topic of FP7 (ex. ICT, Nano, etc) should be mentioned in a particular field?

Only one topic 'Any research topic covered by the EC FP7' exist for this call. The proposal's thematic topic should be clearly indicated in the description of work (part B).

Are "letters of intent" obligatory to put in the project formulation phase?

No, they are not. However, they can be useful if they describe the topics, activities foreseen, etc. for the whole range of activities of the Action Plan.

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The document has been prepared under the ResPotNet project, WP 3: Exchange of good practices – Training Activities for mutual benefit, Task 3.5: Communication Platform “NCPs Helpdesk”.

The aim is to promote the exchange of good practice and knowledge among NCPs, to facilitate the daily problem-solving, and to upgrade the services provided to potential proposers by accurate and prompt replies to queries.

The document includes questions received by the National Contact Points. It is complementary to the FAQs provided by the European Commission.