

WORK PROGRAMME 2008

COOPERATION

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(European Commission C(2007)5765 of 29 November 2007)

Annex 1: List of International Co-operation Partner Countries (ICPC)¹

ACP*

-AFRICAN

- Angola
- Benin
- Botswana
- Burkina-Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Cape Verde
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Comoros
- Congo (Republic)
- Congo (Democratic Rep. of)
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Djibouti
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Sao Tome and Principe
- Senegal
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Somalia

¹ Up-to-date information on status of countries available at: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/who_en.html#countries

- South Africa²
- Sudan
- Swaziland
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

-CARIBBEAN

- Barbados
- Belize
- Cuba
- Dominica
- Dominican Rep.
- Grenada
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Saint Kitts and Nevis
- Saint Lucia
- Saint Vincent and Grenadines
- Suriname
- Trinidad and Tobago

-PACIFIC

- Cook Islands
- Timor Leste
- Fiji
- Kiribati
- Marshall Islands
- Micronesia, Federal States of
- Nauru
- Niue
- Palau
- Papua New Guinea
- Solomon Islands
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu
- Samoa

ASIA

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- Burma/Myanmar
- Cambodia
- China^{2***}
- India^{2**}
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Malaysia

² Signed an agreement with the EC covering Science & Technology

- Maldives
- Mongolia
- Nepal
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- Vietnam
- Yemen

EASTERN EUROPE

AND CENTRAL

ASIA (EECA)

- Armenia³
- Azerbaijan³
- Belarus³
- Georgia³
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyz Republic
- Moldova³
- Russia^{2**}
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Ukraine^{2,3}
- Uzbekistan

LATIN AMERICA

- Argentina²
- Bolivia
- Brazil^{2**}
- Chile²
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mexico²
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Uruguay
- Venezuela

MEDITERRANEAN

PARTNER

COUNTRIES (MPC)

- Algeria³
- Egypt^{2,3}
- Jordan³
- Lebanon³
- Libya³
- Morocco^{2,3}
- Palestinian-administered areas³
- Syrian Arab Rep.³
- Tunisia^{2,3}

³ These countries are also part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES (WBC)

- Albania⁴
- Bosnia-Herzegovina⁴
- Kosovo⁵
- Montenegro⁴

*In the 'Specific international cooperation actions', Africa can also be considered as a region on its own, while the Caribbean countries can also participate with Latin American and the Pacific countries with Asia.

**For participation in the 'Specific international cooperation actions' each of Brazil, China, India and Russia may be considered individually as a region on its own. Thus, the required two or more partners can be located in these countries. However, in this case, at least two different partners from different provinces, oblasts, republics or states within Brazil, China, India or Russia are necessary.

⁴ Until the country becomes Associated to FP7.

⁵ As defined by UNSC resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999.

Annex 2: Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria for Proposals

Eligibility criteria

A proposal will only be considered eligible if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is received by the Commission before the deadline given in the call text.
- It involves at least the minimum number of participants given in the call text.
- It is complete (i.e. both the requested administrative forms and the proposal description are present)
- The content of the proposal relates to the topic(s) and funding scheme(s), including any special conditions, set out in those parts of the relevant work programme

Other eligibility criteria may be given in the call text.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria against which proposals will be judged are set out in article 15 of the Rules for Participation. For the 'Cooperation' specific programme these are:

- scientific and/or technological excellence;
- relevance to the objectives of these specific programmes¹;
- the potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results;
- the quality and efficiency of the implementation and management.

Within this framework, the work programmes will specify the evaluation and selection criteria and may add additional requirements, weightings and thresholds, or set out further details on the application of the criteria.

The purpose of this annex is to set out such specifications. Unless otherwise indicated in the relevant parts of this work programme, the criteria, weightings and thresholds given here will apply to all calls for proposals.

Proposals will be evaluated in line with the Commission 'Rules on Submission of Proposals and the Related Evaluation, Selection and Award Procedures'.

A proposal which contravenes fundamental ethical principles, fails to comply with the relevant security procedures, or which does not fulfil any other of the conditions set out in the specific programme, the work programme or in the call for proposals shall not be selected. Such a proposal may be excluded from the evaluation, selection and award procedures at any time. Details of the procedure to be followed are given in the Commission rules mentioned above.

The arrangements for a particular call will be set out in the relevant Guide for Applicants.

¹ **Relevance** will be considered in relation to the topic(s) of the work programme open in a given call, and to the objectives of a call. In the scheme set out on the following page, these aspects will be integrated in the application of the criterion "S/T excellence", and the first sub-criterion under "Impact" respectively. When a proposal is **partially relevant** because it only marginally addresses the topic(s) of a call, or because only part of the proposal addresses the topic(s), this condition will be reflected in the scoring of the first criterion. Proposals that are clearly not relevant to a call ("out of scope") will be rejected on eligibility grounds.

		1. Scientific and/or technological excellence <i>(relevant to the topics addressed by the call)</i> (award)	2. Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management (selection)	3. The potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results (award)
All funding schemes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Soundness of concept, and quality of objectives</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of the management structure and procedures • Quality and relevant experience of the individual participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Contribution, at the European [and/or international] level, to the expected impacts listed in the work programme under relevant topic/activity</i>
Collaborative projects		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Progress beyond the state-of-the-art</i> • Quality and effectiveness of the S/T methodology and associated work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the consortium as a whole (including complementarity, balance) • Appropriateness of the allocation and justification of the resources to be committed (budget, staff, equipment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of measures for the dissemination and/or exploitation of project results, and management of intellectual property.
Networks of Excellence		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Contribution to long-term integration of high quality S/T research</i> • Quality and effectiveness of the joint programme of activities and associated work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the consortium as a whole (including ability to tackle fragmentation of the research field, and commitment towards a deep and durable integration) • Adequacy of resources for successfully carrying out the joint programme of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of measures for spreading excellence, exploiting results, and disseminating knowledge, through engagement with stakeholders and the public at large.
Co-ordination & support actions	CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to the co-ordination of high quality research • Quality and effectiveness of the co-ordination mechanisms, and associated work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the consortium as a whole (including complementarity, balance) [for SA: only if relevant] • Appropriateness of the allocation and justification of the resources to be committed (budget, staff, equipment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of measures for spreading excellence, exploiting results, and dissemination knowledge, through engagement with stakeholders, and the public at large.
	SA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and effectiveness of the support action mechanisms, and associated work plan 		
Research for the benefit of specific groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative character in relation to the state-of-the art • Contribution to advancement of knowledge / technological progress • Quality and effectiveness of S/T methodology and associated work plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the consortium as a whole (including complementarity and balance) • Appropriateness of the allocation and justification of the resources to be committed (budget, staff, equipment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of measures for the dissemination and/or exploitation of project results, and management of intellectual property

Notes:

1. Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the three criteria, and not for the sub-criteria. Each criterion will be scored out of 5. No weightings will apply. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10.
2. The second column corresponds to the **selection criteria** in the meaning of the financial regulation² (article 115) and its implementing rules³ (articles 176 and 177). They also will be the basis for assessing the 'operational capacity' of participants. The other two criteria correspond to the **award criteria**.
3. For the evaluation of first-stage proposals under a two-stage submission procedure, only the sub-criteria in italics apply.

² OJ L248 16.9.2002, p1.

³ OJ L357 31.12.2002, p1

Annex 3: Forms of Grant and Maximum Reimbursement Rates for Projects Funded Through the Cooperation Work Programme

Forms of Grant

The FP7 'Rules for Participation' propose three potential forms of grant for the Community financial contribution: reimbursement of eligible costs, flat rate financing including scale of unit costs, and lump sum financing. In this work programme, for all funding schemes, the reimbursement of eligible costs (including the different options for flat rates on indirect costs as established in Article 32 of the Rules for Participation) will be the only form of grant used.

One exception to this will apply. Pursuant to Article 30 of the Rules for Participation and Commission Decision C(2007)2287 of 4 June 2007, participants from International Cooperation Partner Countries (see Annex 1) may choose to opt for lump sum financing.

Maximum Reimbursement Rates

The upper limits foreseen in the Rules for Participation (Article 33) for the Community financial contribution are summarised in the following table.

	Non-profit public bodies, secondary and higher education establishments, research organisations and SMEs	All other organisations
Research and technological development activities	75%	50% ⁴
Demonstration activities	50%	50%
Coordination and support actions	100%	100%
Management, audit certificates and other activities ⁵	100%	100%

⁴ For security related research and technological development activities, (Chapter 10 of this work programme) the Community financial contribution may reach a maximum of 75% in the case of the development of capabilities in domains with very limited market size and a risk of 'market failure' and for accelerated equipment development in response to new threats. Further information is given in Chapter 10.

⁵ Including, inter alia training in actions that do not fall under the funding schemes for training and career development of researchers, coordination, networking and dissemination (as set out in Article 33(4) of the Rules for Participation).

Annex 4 General Activities

In this annex, the activities which are funded across the Programme are presented. These activities concern in particular the following:

Dissemination, knowledge transfer and broader engagement

1. The CORDIS services

Co-ordination of non-Community research programmes

2. The horizontal ERA-NET scheme
3. Research organisations in the EU
4. Strengthened coordination with EUREKA
5. Scientific and technological cooperation activities carried out in COST

Risk-Sharing Finance Facility

6. Contribution to the European Investment Bank (EIB)

A4.1 THE CORDIS SERVICES

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 for all thematic areas. This will be implemented by means of CORDIS, the 'Community Research and Development Information Service', and other sources of financing relating to dissemination, knowledge transfer and broader engagement, which will provide services to foster the dissemination of knowledge and the exploitation of research results. The costs for CORDIS activities, which are listed below, for 2008 will be a maximum of EUR 7 million⁶. The activities will be implemented through an administrative arrangement with the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities and guided through the governance structure of the proposed CORDIS Service Management Board, involving all the research DGs under the chairmanship of DG Research.

The impact of migrating the hosting of the CORDIS website from the current location to a more generic hosting environment, such as the Data Centre of the European Commission Directorate General for Informatics, should also be taken into account. The recasting of the CORDIS architecture required by such a migration would involve costs that have not yet been assessed. These costs are not covered by the above-mentioned sum of EUR 7 million, which is intended for the activities described below.

The description below is indicative. The precise content will be agreed with the CORDIS Service Management Board.

The main CORDIS activities for the Framework Programmes will be:

⁶ To be taken from the Themes in the Co-operation Programme on a pro-rata basis, and under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2008 is adopted without modifications by the budget authority.

- CORDIS Online (editorial, news, promotion)
 - Maintaining the CORDIS site, focusing on all activities of the Framework Programmes.
 - Editorial support (e.g. animation, coordination, guidance) to Information Providers from the various EU services funded by the Framework Programmes to populate and update the CORDIS information services.
 - Editorial activities to inform on the implementation of the Framework Programmes, in particular the launch of the forthcoming calls for proposals.
 - Daily publishing of CORDIS news (e.g. on events, calls for proposals, results etc.).
 - Production and publishing of information relating to calls for proposals under the Framework Programmes, including calls for proposals pages.
 - Editorial support (e.g. animation, coordination, guidance) toward national and regional contact points (cf. ERA links, ERAwatch, NCP – National contact points) of the Framework Programmes.
 - Improving multilingual coverage (for elements such as CORDIS top pages, guidance, help, FAQ).
 - Governance via editorial committees and advisory groups.
 - Promotion and marketing activities of the CORDIS services in various conferences, exhibitions and official events focusing on R&D.
- Publications (CORDIS Focus, news and supplements)
 - From January 2008, the publication CORDIS Focus will be merged with research*EU. The CORDIS service will be involved in publishing the following supplements:
 - research*EU results supplement: 10 editions in one language;
 - research*EU thematic supplement: 10 editions in the appropriate number of languages (up to six) according to the target audience;
 - Printing and dissemination to subscribers, including management of distribution list, user surveys (dissemination mainly using CORDIS electronic notification service, print on demand and cost recovery for additional copies).
 - Production of posters, flyers, and factsheets.
- Value added information services for the Framework Programmes
 - Corrective and evolutive maintenance of the core services offered as part of CORDIS for supporting the Framework Programmes:

- Information pages providing access to Framework Programme calls for proposals, including front end to the preparation of proposals and their submission via EPSS;
 - Front end for the Framework Programme expert registration system;
 - Front end to the National Contact Points located in the Member States, Associated Countries and Third Countries (where relevant);
 - Web content management environment for empowerment of Information Providers;
 - Information systems developed at the request of Framework Programme stakeholders, such as ERAWATCH and ERA-Link⁷;
 - News, News Express, Events, press releases, and CORDIS Wire (the online submission of information by affiliated CORDIS users);
 - Online fora;
 - Electronic notification system for alerting users to new relevant content;
 - Front end and data warehouse containing public data relating to Framework Programme activities (such as contacts, projects, partners, public results and acronyms) including interfaces with upstream systems (e.g. the FP7 common data warehouse);
 - User-searchable online archives;
 - RSS and web services for syndication with upstream and downstream partners, in particular, easing better integration with the Europa website and reuse of CORDIS content by other sites;
 - Search engine, improvement of search strategies, display, accessibility and handling of results, including Europa search integration;
- Improved ergonomics, accessibility (e.g. WAI compliance) and usability of the CORDIS website.
 - Improving multilingual support in CORDIS:
 - Integration with automatic translation facilities;
 - Interfaces with multilingual thesauri;
 - Improved navigation using multilingual taxonomies.

⁷ Projects conducted outside the budget allocated will be charged to the requestor and the corresponding costs recovered by the Publications Office.

- EU Bookshop - CORDIS (Collection of EU funded R&D reports and publications)
 - Collection of R&D reports and publications according to Framework Programme model grant agreement provisions.
 - Catalogue and production of bibliographical notices for each R&D report and publication.
 - Upload of resulting notices and publications in the EU Bookshop catalogue and repository.
 - Customise a Corporate EU Bookshop dedicated to R&D reports and publications.
 - RSS and web services for syndicating R&D publication records into other electronic dissemination systems.
- Management and Operational Services
 - Hosting the CORDIS website and all associated services, including telecommunications.
 - Monitoring (internal and external) of the CORDIS service to ensure availability, stability, performance and security in conformance with the CORDIS Service Level Agreement.
 - Providing user support to end users and information providers.
 - Conducting and following up on user satisfaction surveys.
 - Providing statistics on usage, response time, availability, and updates, for each of the services hosted by CORDIS.

Additional work programme for the migration of CORDIS services to a new hosting environment (recasting of CORDIS architecture).

Study to evaluate CORDIS hosting scenarios (estimation of the resources and timescales needed and the impact of each scenario on the service as a whole)

Following the decision on the chosen scenario (non-exhaustive list):

- Set up appropriate administrative arrangements and service level agreements;
- Establish a clear prioritisation and a schedule for the migration;
- Recast the software architecture and modules;
- Modify the monitoring and statistics service;
- Acceptance testing of the new software applications after recasting;
- Set up the new hosting environment;
- Acceptance testing of the new hosting environment;

- Migration of dynamic content (e.g. data, users, certificates);
- Set up a parallel architecture in which the existing and new environments can run in parallel for a suitable period (e.g. three months) to ensure a smooth, risk-free transition.

The tentative timetable for calls for tenders is as follows:

Depending on the results of the ex-ante study to be conducted between the end of 2007 and mid 2008, the renewal of the contractual basis for supporting CORDIS activities will be launched by the end of 2008.

A4.2 THE ERA-NET SCHEME

The objective of the ERA-NET scheme is to develop and strengthen the coordination of national and regional research programmes through two specific actions:

- 'ERA-NET actions' - which provide a framework for actors implementing public research programmes to coordinate their activities. This will include support for new ERA-NETs as well as for the broadening and deepening of the scope of existing ERA-NETs, e.g. by extending their partnership, as well as opening mutually their programmes;
- 'ERA-NET Plus actions'- *In a limited number of cases*, additional EU financial support can be provided to facilitate joint calls for proposals between national and/or regional programmes.

Under the ERA-NET scheme, national and regional authorities identify research programmes they wish to coordinate or open up mutually. The participants in these actions are therefore programme 'owners' (typically ministries or regional authorities defining research programmes) or programme 'managers' (such as research councils or other research funding agencies managing research programmes).

The networking and mutual opening of research programmes require a progressive approach. The ERA-NET scheme therefore has a long-term perspective and it is flexible in order to allow for the different ways in which public research funding is organised in different Member or Associated States.

A4.2.1 Approach

As a result of the ERA-NET scheme, progress has been made in reducing fragmentation across the European Research Area (ERA) during FP6. Organisations from all Member and Associated Countries participate actively in the scheme:

- Some 70 ERA-NET actions have been funded (through Coordination Actions), involving hundreds of national research programmes⁸.
- These ERA-NET actions cover a wide range of research fields such as transport, energy, environment, industrial technologies, plant and human health, astrophysics and social sciences. In addition, several ERA-NET actions have been set up to address more horizontal topics such as international cooperation, SMEs, the promotion of gender balance in research and metrology. For a full list of projects, see <http://cordis.europa.eu/coordination/projects.htm>.

During 2006, a series of focused workshops gathered representatives of ongoing ERA-NET actions and other stakeholders. Their reports were instrumental in drawing up this section of the Work Programme. A group of experts summarised the main findings and recommendations of these workshops in a report published at the end of 2006 (See ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/coordination/docs/era_net_review_report_dec2006_en.pdf).

⁸ ERA-NET actions cover both national and regional research programmes. To avoid repetition, the term 'national research programme' will be used in this section to refer to both national and regional research programmes.

Under FP7, the ERA-NET scheme is continued and reinforced:

- New ERA-NET actions will be supported;
- Existing ERA-NET actions may re-apply to receive Commission support to extend and/or reinforce their integration.
- In a new module, called "ERA-NET Plus", the Commission will support the organisation of joint calls between national research programmes by “topping-up” joint trans-national funding with Community funding.

In contrast to FP6, the ERA-NET scheme is no longer a 'stand-alone' action in FP7. It is an implementation tool, which will be used mainly in the context of the Cooperation specific programme, but also in the Parts of the Capacities Programme⁹.

Where the actions are of a horizontal nature or are not directly linked to the Cooperation themes, they will be supported jointly across all of the themes.

A4.2.2 Content of Calls 2008

Proposals to set up ERA-NET or ERA-NET Plus actions may, in principle, be submitted for any topic relevant to the objectives of the Framework Programme, provided the criteria to qualify as an ERA-NET, or ERA-NET Plus, action are met. This covers all Themes under the Cooperation and Capacities programmes as well as actions of a horizontal nature, or those not directly linked to the Cooperation Themes.

For 2008, calls for ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus proposals will be limited to activities or topics which are specified in the Cooperation Programme or in the Parts of the Capacities Programme. In addition, ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus proposals addressing activities or topics which are of a horizontal nature or are not directly linked to any Theme under the Cooperation and Capacities programmes will be considered up to the limits of the indicative budget set out in the call fiche.

The ERA-NET scheme is mainly implemented through a coordinated call which foresees two submission routes:

- one for proposals which refer to activities or topics defined for ERA-NETs / ERA-NET Plus in this Work Programme (or in the Capacities Work Programme) at the level of its various themes. These will be funded by the relevant Theme (see table 2 in the call fiche);
- the other is for proposals which address questions of a horizontal nature, or are not directly linked to the Cooperation themes. These will be supported jointly across all of the Themes (see table 1 in the call fiche).

A4.2.2.1 Activity: ERA-NET actions (Topic ERANET.2008.1)

Eligibility / Funding Scheme

⁹ Since both the Cooperation and the Capacities Specific Programmes foresee the use of ERA-NET / ERA-NET Plus, 'Cooperation themes' will be used in this Work Programme to cover themes in the Cooperation and the Parts of the Capacities Specific Programmes.

The aim of ERA-NET actions is to network research programmes carried out at national or regional level, with a view to their mutual opening and the development and implementation of joint activities

"Research programmes carried out at national or regional level" refers to entire research programmes, parts of such programmes or similar initiatives. Such programmes shall have all of the following characteristics:

- a) be strategically planned (i.e. be composed of a number of research projects focused on a defined subject area or set of problems, that are scheduled to run for a set period of time and that have a co-ordinated management); and
- b) be carried out at national or regional level; and
- c) either be financed or managed directly by national or regional public bodies, or by structures (e.g. agencies) closely related to, or mandated by, public authorities.

Activities under the ERA-NET scheme will be established by means of Coordination and Support Actions (CSA). In contrast to FP6, specific support actions to prepare for full ERA-NET actions will not be available. However, Cooperation Themes may call for specific supporting CSAs to prepare ERA-NET proposals for well defined topics.

The Community contribution shall take the form of a grant consisting of a reimbursement of the eligible costs related to the action.

The minimum number of participants in an ERA-NET consortium is three independent legal entities which finance or manage publicly funded national or regional programmes. *Each of these must be established in a different Member State or Associated country.*

Eligible partners for ERA-NET actions are:

- Programme owners: typically national ministries/regional authorities responsible for defining, financing or managing research programmes carried out at national or regional level.
- Programme 'managers' (such as research councils or funding agencies) or other national or regional organisations that *implement* research programmes under the supervision of the programme owners.
- Programme owners (typically national ministries/regional authorities) which do not have a running or fully fledged research programme at the moment of submitting an ERA-NET proposal, but which are planning, and have committed, to set up such a programme, are also eligible if their participation is well justified and adds value to the overall programme coordination. As such, countries or regions which have less diverse research programmes (in particular new Member States and candidate associated countries) will find their involvement in the ERA-NET scheme greatly facilitated.

Please note that research organisations or universities which are not programme owners or managers are not eligible partners for ERA-NET actions.

In addition, other private legal entities (e.g. charities) which manage research programmes may participate if their participation is well justified and adds value to the overall programme coordination.

Participants are encouraged, as appropriate, to adopt a global approach in their proposals, involving also non-European research programmes in the activities undertaken by ERA-NET actions.

Sole participants (as referred to in Article 10 of the Rules for Participation) may be eligible if the above-mentioned specific criteria for eligible ERA-NET partners are respected. A sole participant shall explicitly indicate which of his 'members' forming a sole legal entity is either a programme owner or programme manager in the proposed action and indicate for these members, the respective national/regional programmes which are at the disposal of the proposed ERA-NET action.

Technical content/scope

ERA-NET actions can cover the networking of national research programmes in all fields of science and technology, including multi- and trans-disciplinary fields of research.

The networking of programmes may involve several levels of cooperation and coordination, depending on the degree of maturity of the network. The use of the ERA-NET scheme should make this evolution possible and should adopt a step-by-step approach.

In this respect, a four step approach covering the following activities could be envisaged:

- (1) information exchange;
- (2) Definition and preparation of joint activities;
- (3) Implementation of joint activities;
- (4) Funding of joint trans-national research.

ERA-NET actions should be ambitious and should aim to reach level 4. They should result in concrete progress towards the opening up of, or cooperation between, the participating research programmes. The cooperation should be sustained, such that it will continue beyond the duration of the ERA-NET action itself.

Activities funded

Activities eligible for funding correspond to the four steps identified in the *'technical content/scope'* section above. More specifically, these include:

(i) Information exchange

This step aims to gather information on the structure and programmes covered by each national research system. It could also improve communication, develop better reciprocal knowledge and promote trust-building among programme owners or managers in similar scientific and technological areas through a mutual learning process, and the systematic exchange of information and good practices.

(ii) Definition and preparation of joint activities

This key part of the action should analyse the information gathered in step 1 and identify the type of cooperation and the areas which will be addressed.

This step should aim to actively prepare and define activities under steps 3 and 4.

It should result in an **Action plan**, which sets out common strategic issues and prepares for a concrete implementation of joint activities.

(iii) Implementation of joint activities

Experience from FP6 has shown that much of the added value in co-ordinating national programmes is gained by trying to implement joint activities, even if in a pilot form.

ERA-NET actions are therefore encouraged to develop and implement, from an early stage in the project, common, joint, strategic activities such as:

- Clustering of nationally-funded research projects, to develop complementarities or mutual reinforcement of ongoing nationally-funded research programmes.
- Multinational project evaluation procedures (common evaluation criteria and methods of implementation). This could contribute in the long-term to the integration of evaluation practices across national research systems (covering proposal, project and programme evaluation).
- Schemes for joint training activities, such as co-supervised theses and international PhD schemes, to help support a wider cooperation in research.
- Schemes for the mutual opening of facilities or laboratories in one country for scientists from another.
- Converging schemes for programme monitoring and evaluation, including joint monitoring or evaluation.
- Schemes for personnel exchange, in the context of the above activities.
- Specific cooperation agreements or arrangements between participating programmes. These would prepare the ground for further trans-national research programmes and ensure that legal barriers are removed.

(iv) Funding of joint trans-national research

The strongest form of programme networking implies the funding and implementation of a joint programme of trans-national research projects or actions. This is likely to involve the setting-up of a common strategy, a joint work programme, common (mutually open) or joint calls for proposals or tenders, a common trans-national evaluation system and a common plan for dissemination of results or experiences. In such schemes, projects funded out of a common or joint call for proposals should involve at least two teams from two different countries.

In this step, other ways of implementing joint research actions could also be developed or explored. For example, a complex or very ambitious research agenda could be divided in various parts, which are each addressed through differentiated national calls. Results would then be shared.

Expected Impact

The ERA-NET scheme aims to reduce the fragmentation of the European Research Area by increasing coordination between national research programmes across the EU Member and Associated States.

ERA-NET actions allow Member States and Associated countries to avoid overlap between their programmes and to develop expertise from mutual learning.

In general, ERA-NET actions should not cover very limited research areas. They should not overlap with other ongoing ERA-NET actions or create further fragmentation. Complementarities to, or coordination with, FP7 activities should be ensured where possible.

ERA-NET actions will result in concrete co-operation between research programmes, such as their networking, their mutual opening and the development and implementation of joint programmes and activities.

The level of ERA-NET actions will depend on their previous experience:

- ERA-NETs launched under FP6 wishing to submit a new proposal under FP7 must include a strong coordination action, directly focusing on steps 3 and 4. As such, these proposals shall aim to broaden the partnership and/or deepen the coordination between the relevant national programmes in the concerned field. In particular, a global approach including non-European research programmes is encouraged.
- New ERA-NET actions, which address topics that were not covered in FP6, should address steps 1 to 3 as a minimum, but are encouraged to aim at the 'four step approach' described above.

The scheme will also enable national or regional systems to collectively take on tasks that they would not have been able to tackle independently.

ERA-NET actions are expected to have a lasting impact. The co-operation developed should provide reliable indications that it could continue beyond the Community funding.

Furthermore, it would be an advantage if the lessons learned and knowledge gathered are disseminated in the European Research Area with a particular focus on new Member States.

In addition to the general impact described above, more specific expected benefits of ERA-NET actions include:

- Achieving critical mass, to ensure the better use of scarce resources;
- Joining forces to provide common answers to common research problems;
- Addressing global issues, common to many EU Member or Associated States;
- Addressing specific geographical issues common to a number of EU Member or Associated States;
- Developing common governance principles (e.g. with respect to ethics, good practices);
- Bring together national programmes which deal with cooperation with third countries, and enable them to speak with a 'single voice';
- Adopt a global approach, including non-European research programmes, to the activities covered by ERA-NET actions.

A4.2.2.2 Activity: ERA-NET PLUS actions (Topic ERANET.2008.2)

Under ERA-NET Plus actions, the Commission provides an incentive to the organisation of joint calls between national or regional research programmes by 'topping-up' joint trans-national funding with Community funding. These joint calls will entail the award of grants to third parties participating in calls for proposals launched under the ERA-NET Plus actions.

These actions require programme owners or programme managers from at least 5 different Member or Associated States to plan a single joint call with a clear financial commitment from the participating national or regional research programmes.

Funding Scheme

As for ERA-NET actions, ERA-NET Plus actions will be supported through Coordination and Support Actions.

The Community will top up the total of the national contributions to the joint call with additional funding for RTD activities. The Community contribution will be limited to a maximum of 33% of the total contributions to the joint call budget (i.e. if an action plans a joint call for EUR 9 million, national programmes must commit at least EUR 6 million. If the proposal is selected, the Commission will award up to EUR 3 million to also cover eligible coordination costs). The combined national/regional and Community contributions to the joint calls have to exceed EUR5 million.

The Community will also financially support the activities linked to the preparation and the coordination of the joint call¹⁰. This support should be a limited part of the Commission grant mentioned above.

The Community contribution shall take the form of a grant. This grant will combine the reimbursement of eligible costs (covering the activities linked to the preparation and coordination of the joint call) *and* the reimbursement of eligible costs as an agreed proportional contribution to the national pooling of funds (for activities relating to the funding of selected trans-national projects, maximum 33%). However, in accordance with the Decisions concerning the 7th Framework Programme¹¹ and the 'Cooperation' Specific Programme¹², the provisions of Article 120(2) of the Council Regulation on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities¹³ and Article 184a of the Commission Regulation laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation on the Financial Regulation

¹⁰ NB: No further supporting cost will be eligible once a 'selection decision' has been taken by the consortium as a result of the joint call.

¹¹ OJ L 412, 30.12.2006, p. 1 Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006

¹² OJ L 400, 30.12.2006, p. 86

¹³ Council Regulation No. 1605/2002 of 25.6.2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L248, 16.09.2002, p1), as amended by Council Regulation No 1995/2006 of 13 December 2006 (OJ L390, 30.12.2006, p1).

applicable to the general budget of the European Communities,¹⁴ shall not be applicable with regard to the financial support provided by the participants in the ERA-NET Plus actions to third parties participating in projects selected following calls for proposals launched under these actions.

The total duration of a given ERA-NET Plus action and of the resulting projects should normally not exceed 5 years.

Specific Eligibility criteria for ERA-NET Plus actions

ERA-NET Plus proposals must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- a single joint call should be planned with a clear financial commitment from the participating national or regional programmes¹⁵;
- eligible participants are the same as for ERA-NET actions with the exception that, programme owners which do not have yet a running or fully fledged research programme at the moment of submitting a proposal, are not eligible for ERA-NET Plus actions. Furthermore, a consortium must include programme owners or programme managers from at least 5 different Member or Associated countries;
- the same additional participants as for ERA-NET actions are eligible, beyond the number of 5 minimum programme owners or managers;
- the total planned budget of the joint call shall have a minimum financial volume of 5 million €;
- a common peer review mechanism for evaluating the proposals submitted to the joint call shall be foreseen;
- each project financed out of the joint call shall be trans-national (i.e. minimum of two partners from different countries);
- a fixed common set of general evaluation/selection criteria (excellence, European added value, etc.) should be part of the common evaluation criteria of the joint call organised by the national programmes.

Detailed rules for participation in the funded trans-national projects shall be defined by the call organisers themselves (e.g. participating national programmes).

Expected Impact

ERA-NET Plus actions aim to facilitate the launching of joint calls for proposals between EU Member or Associated countries, based on their European added value. In special cases, they may also facilitate the transition of an ERA-NET towards an Article 169 initiative, where the criteria for the latter are met.

The EU added value will be a critical criterion to evaluate the impact of ERA-NET Plus actions and will depend on the area/topic covered by the research programmes participating in the joint call. Therefore the following criteria should help to identify the impact of ERA-NET Plus actions offering best prospects for sufficient European added value:

¹⁴ Commission Regulation No, 2342/2002 of 23.12.2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation No. 1605/2002 (OJ L357, 31.12.2002, p1) as last amended by Regulation No. 478/2007 of 23.04.2007 (OJ L111, 28.04.2007, p13).

¹⁵ Proposals must demonstrate that national research programmes are committed to support the call. Selected proposals will have to provide evidence that a commitment has been made by the relevant research programmes.

- **Relevance to EU objectives:** The field of the potential topic should be of major interest for the Community as a whole.
- **Framework Programme relevance:** As regards '**objective**': Demonstration that an ERA-NET Plus action in that topic shall allow the Community to reach one of its objectives: enhance coordination of national programmes. As regards '**content**': The field of the potential topic shall be covered by the Framework Programme both in terms of scientific content and of budget allocation.
- **Pre-existing basis:** The ERA-NET Plus action should build on a pre-existing basis or coordination experience between national programmes in the topic identified.
- **Critical mass:** ERA-NET Plus actions will enable national programmes to address together with the Community programmes research areas, that due to the nature of the field are better addressed jointly or fields which would/could not have been addressed independently.
- **Instrument relevance:** Demonstration that ERA-NET Plus is the most appropriate instrument to allow the achievement of the Framework Programme goals in terms of non Community programme coordination (i.e. avoiding fragmentation, etc.). Demonstration that implementing an ERA-NET Plus action in a given field is more appropriate to coordination goals than other FP7 funding

ERA-NET Plus actions are expected, where appropriate, to facilitate the development of a more global approach to the topics addressed, involving also non European research programme.

ERA-NET Plus actions are expected to have a lasting impact. The co-operation developed should provide reliable indications that it could continue beyond the joint call supported by the Community funding.

A4.2.3: Support for programme coordination and cooperation in the context of the European Research Area.

The main objective of the ERA-NET scheme is to contribute, by both structuring effects and economies of scale, to the development and growth of the European Research Area (ERA). This further development of ERA is expected to greatly benefit from facilitating measures with and between relevant organisations, which are the natural interlocutors for the coordination and cooperation of non-Community research programmes. To meet this objective, a limited number of studies, conferences, workshops, etc. will be supported through relevant calls for proposals, or calls for tenders as required.

For 2008 the following grants to named recipients and calls for proposals are foreseen:

A4.2.3.1 Grant for a central information platform for ERA-NETs – eraNETWATCH (Topic ERANET.2008.3)

Expected impact

To exploit the ERAWATCH web server on European research programmes¹⁶ to provide programme owners, programme managers and researchers with information on transnational programme co-operation as undertaken in the ERA-NET scheme or under Article 169 initiatives.

The information platform should also allow research programme owners and managers to share best practices and expertise. Researchers would also be able to locate future or ongoing research activities not only by country, but also by research area, across several countries thanks to a mapping service. This would, eventually, allow researchers to make more informed decisions and focus their efforts when applying to national or trans-national calls for proposals.

Scope

To make available the contribution of ERA-NETs to the European Research Area, it is foreseen to set up a central information platform on ERA-NETs in cooperation with the Commission Joint Research Centre. The aim of the platform is to increase mutual learning and coordination amongst ERA-NET stakeholders, and in particular: EU policy makers and policy analysts, ERA-NET managers and coordinators as well as researchers applying to transnational calls. It will be an instrument to easily and quickly obtain practical information about ERA-NETs in order to allow the dissemination of good practices in the design and implementation of ERA-NETs and joint programming activities by Member States. At the same time, the information platform will also present sets of analysis on the typology, the development and the impact of ERA-NETs within the European Research Area.

Funding scheme: The development of the service would be supported using a Coordination and Support action (supporting). A grant of a maximum of EUR 2 100 000 over three years will be provided¹⁷ to the IPTS (Institute for Prospective Technological Studies – Seville) of the Joint Research Centre, that operates the ERAWATCH server.

Tentative timetable: Signature of the contract in November 2008, with estimated payments of EUR 700 000 per year.

The maximum rates of co-financing and the award and selection criteria, for this topic, are set out in Annexes 2 and 3 of this work programme.

Budget for A4.2.3.1 in 2008 : EUR 2 100 000

A4.2.3.2 Call for proposals for well targeted conferences and other support actions reviewing the process of research programme integration (Topic ERANET.2008.4)

Expected impact

The selected conferences and other support actions will provide an opportunity for the main public actors engaged in designing and deploying the broad structures and functions supporting coordination of national programmes in the ERA to meet, in particular concerning issues such as

¹⁶ <http://cordis.europa.eu/erawatch/>

¹⁷ In compliance with Article 14(a) of the Rules of Participation and Article 168 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation.

joint programming of research. This could include events focussing on progress reviews as well as those focusing on the creation of added value from inter-governmental cooperation in research via the coordination, cooperation and integration of national and/or regional programmes.

Scope

Support for conferences, seminars, coordination and cooperation activities and other support actions which aim to promote the roles of national and regional actors in building the ERA. Only events and actions designed to deliver clear and usable results to further support coordination of national research programmes or their joint programming in the context of ERA may be considered. Proposals must be of a horizontal nature (i.e. cutting across several themes in the Cooperation Specific Programme or Parts of the Capacities Programme), or not directly linked to the themes.

Funding scheme: Coordination and Support Actions (Supporting type). All proposed events should be planned for at least six months after the closing date of the call in order to allow sufficient time to complete all procedures for the funding to be in place.

Open in call: FP7-ERANET-2008-RTD

Budget for A4.2.3.2: EUR 700 000

A4.2.3.3 External expertise

A budget of EUR 100 000 is foreseen for appointed external experts that will be involved in the evaluation of proposals submitted under the co-ordinated call on ERA-NET and, where appropriate, for reviewing running projects.

Call title: ERA-NET / ERA-NET PLUS Call 2008

Call identifier: FP7-ERANET-2008-RTD

- Date of publication¹⁸: 30 November 2007
- Deadline¹⁹: 12 August 2008, at 17.00.00, Brussels local time.
- **Indicative budget and Topics**^{20, 21, 22}

An overall budget of up to EUR 29.3 million (inclusive of theme-linked, horizontal or indirectly linked activities) is foreseen for the co-ordinated ERA-NET call. It will cover two types of activities/topics.

1. A total of EUR 16.8 million, provided jointly by all Themes of the Cooperation Programme, is foreseen for actions of a horizontal nature or not directly linked to cooperation themes, to be apportioned between ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus proposals of a horizontal nature or not directly linked to cooperation themes (EUR 16.1 million) and for Conferences/Support Actions (EUR 0.7 million).

Table 1: Actions of a horizontal nature or not directly linked to Cooperation Themes

Activity/ Area	Topics called	Funding Schemes and Budget
A4.2.2.1 ERA-NET actions	Topic ERANET.2008.1 ERA-NET proposals of a horizontal nature (i.e. cutting across several themes in the Cooperation Specific Programme or Parts in Capacities), or not directly linked to Cooperation Themes.	Coordination and Support Actions (Coordinating)
A4.2.2.2 ERA-NET Plus actions	Topic ERANET.2008.2 ERA-NET Plus proposals of a horizontal nature (i.e. cutting across several themes in the Cooperation Specific Programme or Parts in Capacities), or not directly linked to Cooperation Themes.	EUR 16.1 million ²⁰
A4.2.3.2 Conferences and other	Topic ERANET.2008.4	Coordination and

¹⁸ The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication.

¹⁹ At the time of the publication of the call, the Director-General responsible may delay this deadline by up to two months.

²⁰ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2008 is adopted without modifications by the budget authority.

²¹ An amount from the 2009 budget is expected to be added to this call for which a new financing decision to cover the budget for that year will be requested at the appropriate time.

²² The budget for this call is indicative. The final budget awarded to this call, following the evaluation of projects, may however vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call. All budgetary figures given are also indicative. The repartition of the sub-budgets awarded within this call, following the evaluation of projects, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call

support actions	Support actions reviewing co-ordination and integration of research programmes being of a horizontal nature (i.e. cutting across several themes in the Cooperation Specific Programme or Parts in Capacities), or not directly linked to Cooperation Themes	support actions (Supporting) EUR 0.7 million ²⁰
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2. A sum of up to EUR 12.5 million,^{23,24} provided by the Theme concerned, is foreseen in this co-ordinated call for ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus actions identified by Cooperation Themes in this work programme.

Table2 – Overview of Activities and Topics which are part of the FP7-ERANET-2008 –RTD co-ordinated call.

THEME/Activity	Topic identifier	TITLE	Budget (EUR million)
COOPERATION SPECIFIC PROGRAMME			
2. FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, AND BIOTECHNOLOGY			
2.1.4 - Socio-economic research and support to policies	KBBE-2008 1.4.10	Agriculture and sustainable development in a rural development context.	1.0 ²³
4. NMP			
4.2.6 Coordinated activities and international cooperation	NMP-2008 2.6-4	ERA-NET Plus on Materials Research	0.0 ²⁴
4.4 Integration of technologies for industrial applications	NMP-2008 .4.0-13	ERA –NET on Nano-Medicine	0.0 ²⁴
4.4 Integration of technologies for industrial applications	NMP-2008 .4.0-14	ERANET on trans-national cooperation for new innovative products in the forest-based value chains	
4.4 Integration of technologies for industrial applications	NMP-2008 .4.0-15	ERA-NET on implementing micro- and nano-manufacturing technologies within Member States industry	

²³ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2008 is adopted without modifications by the budget authority.

²⁴ An amount from the 2009 budget is expected to be added to this call for which a new financing decision to cover the budget for that year will be requested at the appropriate time.

7. TRANSPORT (Including Aeronautics)			
7.1.7. Cross-cutting activities	AAT-2008 7.10	Co-ordination of national research programmes for further developing the European Research Area in the field of Aeronautics and Air Transport	0.0 ²⁴
7.2.6 Cross-cutting activities	SST-2008.6.8	ERA-NET Road II	1.5 ²³
8. SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCIENCES AND THE HUMANITIES			
8.8. Strategic Activities	SSH-2008 8.6	ERA-NET Plus actions in Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities	10.0 ²³

- Evaluation procedure :
 - The general evaluation criteria and sub-criteria (including weights and thresholds) for the different funding schemes are set out in annex 2 to this work programme
 - The evaluation will follow a single stage procedure.
 - Proposals will not be evaluated anonymously.
 - Proposals may be evaluated remotely.
- Indicative evaluation and contractual timetable:
 - Evaluation in September 2008
 - Opening of negotiations in November 2008
 - Selections from January 2009
 - Contracts from February 2009
- Consortia agreements:

Consortia Agreements are recommended, particularly for ERANET Plus actions.
- The forms of grant and maximum reimbursement rates which will be offered are specified in Annex 3 to the Cooperation work programme. For ERA-NET Plus actions, the maximum reimbursement rate for activities relating to the funding of selected trans-national projects is 33%.
- Particular requirements for participation, evaluation and implementation:
 - The minimum number of participating legal entities required, for all funding schemes, is set out in the Rules for Participation.
 - See parts on eligibility of participants in the description of the activity.
 - For the evaluation of ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus proposals, the general criteria and thresholds applicable to Coordination and Support Actions given in Annex 2, are complemented as follows:

1. *Scientific and/or technological excellence - Quality of coordination (Threshold 4/5 instead of 3/5)*

- The management should be supported by a suitable governance structure involving the participating organisations at an appropriate level.

2. *Quality and efficiency of the implementation (Threshold 3/5)*

- In reference to the applicable work programme, does the proposed ERA-NET / ERA-NET Plus action pool the necessary resources between national programmes and the Community and does it represent the most appropriate type of public funding for this pre-defined area?

3. *Potential impact (Threshold 3/5)*

- The participants should be the key actors within their national or regional research systems.
- The ERA-NET activities should lay the foundations for a durable cooperation between the partners involved.
- Is there a clearly identified and agreed European added value through a variable geometry approach?

A reserve list may be produced of proposals that pass the evaluation, but fall below the available budget, in case any additional budget becomes available

(end of call fiche)

For information purposes, Table 3 below provides an overview of calls for ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus actions made by other Themes in Cooperation and some Parts in Capacities. Some of these may take advantage of the evaluation of the above coordinated call to carry out the evaluation of proposals simultaneously.

Table 3 – Other Activities and Topics calling for ERA-NET and ERA-NET Plus actions

THEME/Activity	Topic identifier	TITLE	Budget (EUR million)
CAPACITIES SPECIFIC PROGRAMME			
Part 1. INFRASTRUCTURE			
3. Accompanying Measures	INFRA-2008 3.1 (<i>deadline 29 February 2008</i>)	ERA-NET supporting cooperation for research infrastructures in all S&T fields	4.0 ^{25, 26}

²⁵ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2008 is adopted without modifications by the budget authority. An amount from the 2009 budget is expected to be added to this call for which a new financing decision to cover the budget for that year will be requested at the appropriate time.

²⁶ The budget for this call is indicative. The final budget awarded to this call, following the evaluation of projects, may however vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call. All budgetary figures given are also indicative. The repartition of the sub-budgets awarded within this call, following the evaluation of projects, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call.

Part 6. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION			
3.1 ERA-NET in INCO	INCO-2007 ERA-NET (<i>deadline 12 February 2008</i>)	ERA-NET - Supporting the coordination of national policies and activities on international S&T cooperation	11.0 ²⁷
3.2 ERA-NET Plus in INCO	INCO-2007 ERA-NET Plus (<i>deadline 12 February 2008</i>)	ERA-NET Plus - Supporting the coordination of national policies and activities on international S&T cooperation	

In addition, Coordination and Support Actions for the coordination of national and regional research programmes or initiatives are called for within 17 areas/objectives under the ICT Theme.

²⁷ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2008 is adopted without modifications by the budget authority.

A4.3: SUPPORT FOR COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITH AND BETWEEN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER HIGH-LEVEL SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS IN THE EU, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ERA.

NOT OPEN IN 2008

No call for proposals or call for tenders is foreseen in this work programme for the above action.

A4. 4 STRENGTHENED COORDINATION WITH EUREKA

The Specific Cooperation Programme will support coordination activities aimed at increasing complementarities and synergy between EUREKA and the Framework Programme in areas of common interest. The Community is a member of EUREKA. All EUREKA members contribute to the budget of the EUREKA Secretariat.

The following activities are foreseen:

- creating and strengthening synergies between the Framework Programme and EUREKA in order to carry out initiatives across the full spectrum of the research and innovation cycle in a complementary and/or cooperative manner;
- continuing the exchange of technical information, mainly in the stimulation of 'brokerage events', notably for the benefit of research and innovation in SMEs and the exchange of expertise in project and impact evaluation.

Membership contribution from the Commission to the EUREKA Secretariat is about 2 million € for the duration of the 7th Framework Programme. This contribution in 2008 will be up to EUR 300 000.

A4. 5 SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN COST

COST is a long-standing, bottom-up mechanism that facilitates coordination and exchanges between nationally funded scientists and research teams in a variety of research fields. During the Sixth Framework Programme, COST underwent significant reforms as a result of which it can now contribute cost-effectively to research coordination within the European Research Area.

The Community's funding²⁸ to COST under FP7 is specified in the Cooperation Specific Programme, whereby the Community's grant will be at least EUR 210 million and up to EUR 250 million for COST, subject to a mid-term evaluation. This grant is subject to a grant agreement between the Commission and the European Science Foundation, the legal entity designated by COST as its implementing agent and communicated to the Commission by the General Secretariat of the Council. The first instalment of the grant of EUR 30 million was made on 31 July 2007 for a period until 1 June 2008. In 2008 the grant agreement will be

²⁸ As Coordination and Support Action to be implemented in accordance with Article 14a of the Rules for participation and dissemination of the 7th Framework Programme.

extended by an additional 12 months until 1 June 2009, with a complementary Community financial contribution of EUR 30 million.

Reinforced coordination among the activities of the European Science Foundation, COST and the Framework Programme will also be sought in areas of common interest. The partnership between the Commission and COST will be further developed.

A4. 6 RISK-SHARING FINANCE FACILITY

In accordance with Annex III of the Specific Programme, the Community will provide a contribution to the European Investment Bank (EIB). This support 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 the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF), a new financing instrument established by the European Investment Bank with the support of the EC

Private investment in research and innovation in Europe is below the level necessary to achieve the ambitions of the Lisbon agenda and the Barcelona objective. In addition to grants, other mechanisms are being increasingly used to leverage private investment by firms, to mobilise the financial markets and to diversify funding sources for European RTD actions.

Improving access to loans for RTD actions requires public support to overcome market deficiencies for the financing of riskier European RTD actions.

A4.6.1 Approach

Within the framework of a maximum contribution of EUR 1 billion for the period 2007-2013, the Community has provided its first contribution (Coordination and Support Action) to the EIB for RSFF for a maximum amount of EUR 200 million for the period 2007-2008, EUR 160 millions of which coming from the Cooperation Specific Programme. The Bank is the sole beneficiary of this Community action. Pursuant to a decision by the EIB Board of Directors, endorsed by the Bank's Governors on 9 June 2006, the EC contribution will be matched by an equivalent amount from the EIB (up to EUR 1 billion). The Governors approved the immediate appropriation from the Bank's surplus of EUR 250 million for RSFF operations.

The level of the Community risk coverage for each operation shall depend on the financial risk evaluation carried out by the EIB. The level of total provisioning and capital allocation for the majority of RSFF operations is expected to fall within the range of 15%-25% of the nominal value of such operations. In no case shall the level of total provisioning and capital allocation amounts of the Community contribution exceed 50% of the nominal loan or guarantee value. There will be risk sharing under each operation, according to the methodology established in the Agreement to be concluded between the Commission and the EIB. The percentage of risk covered by the Community contribution for each operation will be variable and will depend, inter alia, on the risk grading of such operation as well as its maturity.

The co-operation agreement between the European Community (EC) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) in respect of the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) – the RSFF Co-operation agreement – was approved by the Commission (Commission Decision C(2007)2181 –

25/05/2007) and signed on 5 June 2007 by Commissioner Janez Potočnik and President Philippe Maystadt.

This Agreement, defines terms and conditions related to RSFF and, in particular, to the use of the Community contribution in RSFF, the risk -sharing methodology, the indicative annual budget, the reporting conditions, the governance, the rules for establishment of network of financial intermediaries in all Member States and associated countries and its relating conditions.

As the interest builds up and financing applications emerge, the EIB has launched the appraisal of potential projects according to its usual rules and criteria.

International Co-operation

In accordance with the provisions of the Specific Programme, the EIB may only use the Community contribution to RSFF to cover risk of operations limited to those borrowers or beneficiaries of guarantees from legal entities from third countries other than Associated countries who participate in FP7 projects and whose costs are eligible for Community funding.

Dissemination actions

Throughout 2007 the EIB has carried out an intensive awareness raising campaign which has been launched with the Community financial assistance in 2006 (FP6 SSA). Such awareness raising actions will continue, with special focus on the most research intensive sectors in Europe.

RSFF will involve development of financial engineering solutions adapted to the needs of European RTD actions. Such solutions will be implemented and tested by the EIB and its financing partners.

Case studies of such solutions, i.e. risk-sharing arrangements with financing partners and new products developed specifically for RSFF will be published on the EIB dedicated RSFF web-site.

A workshop for representatives of the banking sector in Member States and Associated countries has been held in July 2007 to disseminate such financial engineering solutions and seek other co-operation opportunities. Initiatives of this kind will be continued in 2008, both at European and national level.

Contacts with potential clients

The launch of RSFF dedicated website and other awareness raising activities started in 2006 are expected to result in applications for financing from promoters of European RTD actions. In parallel, the EIB loan officers will launch contacts with highly research intensive companies explaining the existence of new financing options made possible by RSFF.

RSFF will be offered in all Member States and associated countries in order to ensure that all legal entities, irrespective of size (including SMEs and research organisations, including

universities) in all Member States and Associated Countries, may benefit from this facility for the funding of their activities in eligible actions. This will entail the identification by the EIB of at least one financial intermediary partner active in each Member state and Associated Country. While there is no reason to anticipate any difficulty in this regard, the attention of the Member States and Associated Countries is drawn to the fact that, in case of such difficulty arising (meaning, no financial intermediary partner interested to join EIB network for RSFF purpose), there will be a dependence on the best efforts of the Member States and Associated Countries themselves to ensure that there is no consequential damage to the interests of participants in their countries.

Addressing the financing needs of the Technology Platforms and Joint Technology Initiatives

Having identified in 2006 the most dynamic and active Technology Platforms the Commission and the EIB will continue to follow their individual development and monitor the implementation of their strategic research agendas to search for financing needs which the Bank could address. In some cases customised products, individual or wholesale, will be developed, if necessary in co-operation with other financial institutions.

The Commission and the EIB will follow the development of Joint Technology Initiatives, advising the stakeholders on options available to optimise their financing packages. This may involve bridge financing as well as individual customised financing solutions, specifically adapted to the financing needs.

Implementation arrangements for SMEs

The EIB can only be directly involved in operations with financing requirements in excess of EUR 7.5 million. Smaller requests will be directed to financing partners established in Member States or Associated countries with whom the EIB has or will develop risk sharing arrangements, including Framework Facilities designed to provide intermediated financing, to smaller projects, notably those promoted by SMEs.

A Framework Facility is a line of credit advanced by the EIB to banks or other intermediary institutions which on-lend the proceeds to finance small and medium-size investments.

The deployment of Risk-Sharing Framework Facilities across the EU will be staged, involving, during an initial phase, a limited number of leading EIB partner banks, based in Member State or Associated Countries representing a significant RSFF market potential and operating through important EU-wide networks. In a subsequent phase, a more wide-spread coverage of EU markets will be achieved by approaching, in a systematic manner, other financing partners throughout the EU, in view of setting up Risk-Sharing Framework Facilities covering respective markets.

Risk-Sharing Framework Facilities will be set up either through the introduction of risk sharing arrangements in existing credit lines or through new facilities or intermediaries. Alternative framework financing concepts could also be envisaged.

Governance

RSFF is managed by the EIB in accordance with its own rules and procedures, with due regard to terms and conditions of the RSFF Cooperation Agreement between the Commission and the Bank. RSFF implementation and in particular the use of the Community Contribution will be supervised by a Steering Group, consisting of at least four representatives, at the Director level, from the Commission and the Bank respectively.

The Commission will continue to closely monitor the effective use of the Community Contribution, including ex-post assessments of the successful features of the action, and to regularly report to the Programme Committee. In addition, the Commission will include main findings in this respect to the annual report on research and technological development activities which it will send to the European Parliament and the Council pursuant to Article 173 TEC.

In addition, and in compliance with the mid-term evaluation referred to in Annex II of the Framework Programme, the Commission will provide at that time a report containing information on the participation per type of legal entities, the fulfillment of the FP7 selection criteria, the kind of projects supported and the demand for the instrument concerned, the duration of the authorisation procedure, the project results, and the funding distribution.

A4.6.2 Selection of Projects for Financing and the Eligibility Criteria

The EIB has been recognised as a beneficiary of the Community action in the Council and Parliament decision adopting the 7th Framework Programme.

In accordance with the principles established in the Specific Programme the EIB will use the Community contribution on a "first come, first served basis," as provisions and capital allocation within the Bank to cover part of the risks associated with its operations supporting eligible European RTD actions.

The EC contribution to RSFF may only be used to support activities which can be classified as "fundamental research", "industrial research" or "experimental development" as defined in the Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation. Prototypes and pilot projects, which are part of "experimental development", may be eligible if they fulfil the conditions specified therein. Innovation activities intended to prepare the commercial use of research results (such as training, technology management and transfer) are eligible if they are linked to and complementary to research, technological development and demonstration activities, the later constituting the bulk of any eligible European RTD action.

The RSFF Cooperation Agreement with the Bank comprises a list of investment costs consistent with the above mentioned definitions in the *Community Framework for State Aid for Research and Development and Innovation*.

The RSFF Cooperation Agreement with the Bank also comprises a list of exclusions from financing with support of the Community contribution, reflecting political agreement between the Commission; the Member States and the European Parliament as documented in the 7th Framework Programme and the Specific Programme 'Cooperation'.

A4.6.3 The Commission Right to Object to the Use of the Community Contribution

The Commission has a right to express its opinion on each and every financial operation proposed by the EIB to its Board for decision under (Article 21 of the EIB Statute). Where the Commission delivers an unfavourable opinion, the EIB Board may not grant the loan or guarantee concerned, unless it votes unanimously in its favour, the Commission nominee abstaining. Should the Bank proceed with financing despite the Commission's negative opinion the Community contribution to RSFF may not be used.

In accordance with Rules of Participation, the Commission may object, in duly justified cases, the use of the *Community contribution* for provisioning and capital allocation against a loan *or a guarantee* proposed by the EIB. If such a case arises the Commission may conduct an independent, internal or external, review of such a case.

All Themes of this Work Programme will contribute on a proportional basis, except the Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities theme, which does not contribute to RSFF

In compliance with Annex II to the 7th Framework Programme, the Community financial contribution to RSFF from the abovementioned contributing Themes of the Cooperation Programme will be of an amount of up to EUR 400 million until 2010.

This planning will be revised, and if appropriate, adapted each year, taking into account the evolution of demand for RSFF operations and the results of the evaluation of the Council and the European Parliament under the procedure described in Article 7(2) of the 7th Framework Programme on the basis of a report by the Commission containing information on the participation of SMEs and universities, the fulfilment of the FP7 selection criteria, the duration of the authorisation procedure, the project results, and the funding distribution. The Community financial contribution to RSFF from the Cooperation Programme may reach a maximum amount of EUR 800 million for 2007-2013.

Subject to necessary budgetary approvals, the first payment to the EIB was made at the beginning of the summer 2007 for an amount of EUR 50 million, EUR 14 million of which coming from the Cooperation Specific Programme. In compliance with the provisions of the RSFF Co-operation agreement, an additional payment may be carried out before the end of 2007 according to the level of the demand, reducing therefore the transfer foreseen in 2008 accordingly. As far as the Cooperation Specific Programme is concerned the remaining payment appropriations for the period 2007-2008 is equal to EUR 146 million.

From 2009 on it is foreseen to proceed annually with an equal amount of commitment and payment of the Community contributions to RSFF, based on an the EIB's activity and forecast report and its request for the amount of the contribution estimated necessary for the following year. Following mid-term evaluation, however, the payment may be made in (several) instalments to ensure the maximum match between funds paid to the EIB and used for provisions and capital allocation.

A4.6.4 Community Contribution to RSFF in 2007 and 2008

In order to send a strong signal of the Community commitment to RSFF in line with the mandate from the Council the Commission has committed, in 2007, an amount of EUR 160 million for the period 2007-2008 coming from the Cooperation Specific Programme.

A4.6.5 Process for Recovering and Reallocating Unused Community Funds

In order to mitigate the risk of accumulation of unused funds the multi-annual planning will be adjusted on the basis of reports including pipeline report (summary of information on projects considered for financing) and demand forecasts. Amounts committed but not paid to the EIB – i.e. not used for the operations of RSFF – will be reallocated to other activities of the contributing themes.

Notwithstanding the above and unless the Council adopting the 8th Framework programme decides otherwise the Commission will recover from the Bank any unused funds of the Community contribution (including interest and income) which on the 31 December 2013 have not been used or committed to be used or are required to cover eligible costs The mid-term evaluation will include an external assessment of the impact of the RSFF.

A4.7 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW FOR GENERAL ACTIVITIES FOR 2008

The following provides a financial overview for 2008 of the activities which are funded across the Cooperation Programme:

Activity	Funding for 2008*
A4.1 CORDIS	EUR 7.0 million
A4.2 ERA-NET scheme	EUR 19.0 million <i>broken down as follows:</i>
<i>A4.2.2.1 ERA NET Actions and</i>	
<i>A4.2.2.2 ERA-NET Plus Actions</i>	<i>EUR 16.1 million</i>
<i>A4.2.3.1 Grant to named beneficiary for information platform</i>	<i>EUR 2.1 million</i>
<i>A4.2.3.2 Call for support actions</i>	<i>EUR 0.7 million</i>
<i>A4.2.3.3 External expertise</i>	<i>EUR 0.1 million</i>
A4.3 RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS/ A4.4 EUREKA	EUR 0.3 million
A4.5 COST	EUR 30.0 million
A4.6 RSFF	EUR 0 million
Total:	EUR 56.3 million

* Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2008 is adopted without modifications by the budget authority.