

**WORK PROGRAMME 2009**

***CAPACITIES***

**PART 2**

***RESEARCH FOR THE BENEFIT OF SMES***

***(European Commission C(2008)4566 of 26 August 2008)***

**Capacities Work Programme: Research for the Benefit of SMEs**

The available budget in 2009 for the 2009 work programme is EUR 5 million. This is because the remainder of the 2009 budget has already been used for calls and expert evaluators under the 2008 work programme (EUR 100 million) or is earmarked for the Eurostars programme through a different financing decision (Art 169).

In this 2009 work programme, it is proposed to use EUR 4 million for coordination and support actions for national and regional programmes and EUR 1 million for evaluations (experts).

During 2009 a call will be launched under the 2010 work programme for 'Research for SMEs'. This should be published in mid-2009 and close before the end of the year.

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## **RESEARCH FOR THE BENEFIT OF SMEs**

### **Objectives:**

**Strengthening the innovation capacity of European SMEs and their contribution to the development of new technology based products and markets by helping them outsource research, increase their research efforts, extend their networks, better exploit research results and acquire technological know how, bridging the gap between research and innovation.**

## **I CONTEXT**

### **Approach for 2009**

The SME specific measures are part of the Specific Programme dedicated to enhance the research and innovation capacities of European SMEs.

Faced with the challenges of increased globalisation of markets and technological change, many SMEs do not have the necessary resources to undertake in-house research activities and consequently need to outsource such activities to research performing organisations. The measures of this programme are essentially targeted at those SMEs with little or no research capacity.

High-tech SMEs and those with their own significant research capabilities are encouraged to participate under the Cooperation Programme themes. At least 15% of the funding available under the 'Cooperation' part is foreseen to go to SMEs. Concrete measures, including support actions to facilitate SME participation, are implemented throughout the 'Cooperation' part of the programme in the framework of a strategy developed under each theme. The Commission will continue the quantitative and qualitative monitoring of SME participation against the objectives set.

The overall strategy for WP2009 consists of consolidating the activities already presented in WP2007 and WP2008 (in order to ensure long-term 'continuity' to the SME community targeted by these measures after the substantial changes made at the start of FP7, e.g. new funding model) and fostering the coordination of national/regional SME programmes. In order to encourage greater competition between the research-performing bodies an enhanced effort will be undertaken to inform in particular universities about the possibilities to participate under this work programme.

The previous work programmes (WP2007 and WP2008) contained three main types of activities: first, 'Supporting SMEs outsourcing activities', which included the two 'core activities' "Research for SME" and "Research for SME Associations" - targeted at SMEs wishing to acquire knowledge and research results through the outsourcing of research

activities; secondly, 'Developing and coordinating support to SMEs at national level' and thirdly 'Enhancing the impact of SME participation in European Research'.

In order to have a better alignment between the work programme and the budget of the year of reference, the WP2009 cannot fund any 'core activity' call. These activities will nevertheless continue in 2009. The second stage of the 2008 'Research for SMEs Associations' call will close in May 2009. In addition, the next call for 'Research for SMEs', which will be part of the WP2010, will be published in mid-2009 and close before the end of 2009.

The strategy in WP2009 is to continue making progress in better coordination/integration of national research and development programmes dedicated to SMEs, expanding the focus of activities already started under WP2007 and WP2008 or through other mechanisms:

- (a) *Cornet and ERASME*: Both ERANET initiatives are aimed at coordinating national research programmes targeting SMEs which need to outsource their research.
- (b) *Exploratory Awards*: Financial contribution to a network of national programmes aimed at providing financial support to SMEs preparing project proposals under 'Research for the benefit of SMEs'.
- (c) *Eurostars*: A joint programme under Art. 169 undertaken by 29 Eureka Countries dedicated to support R&D-performing SMEs. The Commission financial support, due to start in 2008, will continue in 2009.

The new initiative under WP2009 is building on the experience gained with the coordination of national SME programmes launched in the previous work programmes, such as ERANETs, and on the results of the Economic and Technological Intelligence (ETIs) projects supported under FP6.

One or several support and coordination actions (CSA) will be awarded to study the support programmes at regional and national level dedicated to facilitate the knowledge production and knowledge acquisition of SMEs and aiming to increase their innovation capacity. The study/ies will examine impact factors and identify good practices and benchmarks to be used by the policy actors in the implementation of their SME strategy. The results of the study/ies will help policy makers to better define the SME strategies and will facilitate the creation of productive partnerships and networks to enhance the quality, performance and cost-effectiveness of SMEs output.

These actions will be implemented through one or several studies for a total of EUR 4 million.

In addition to the above activity,

the Commission will appoint **independent experts** to assist with the evaluations of proposals in accordance with article 17 of the Rules for Participation. In addition independent experts will be appointed to assist the Commission and the participants to indirect actions financed under FP7 and previous framework programmes with the review of running actions.

An indicative budget of EUR 1 million<sup>1</sup> has been earmarked for this purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> Budget provided in the current work programme for information purposes only.

## **II CONTENT OF CALLS IN 2009**

### **Activity: Coordination and Support Activity**

#### **Technical content/scope**

In Europe a wide variety of programmes and initiatives exist at national and regional level to support research activities for the interests and benefits of SMEs.

The Commission will fund one or several studies with the aim to obtain a comprehensive insight into these programmes and initiatives in terms of their structure, methodologies used and their impact on SMEs.

The results of the study/ies will be useful to better define a strategy for the future research actions in favour of SMEs in the European Research Area (ERA), while the regional/national programmes will be able to use the results to improve the impact and effectiveness of their support programmes in favour of SMEs. In the long term, it can be envisaged that the coordination and integration of the European and national research programmes should lead to support mechanisms which better address the need of SMEs.

Successful project proposals will address the SME relevant research implementation modalities utilised by national, regional and local initiatives. They should identify the range and extent of good practices currently in operation across the EU. They should specify:

- The audience of these individual measures in terms of the level and quality of the support provided;
- The range of services provided by implementation intermediaries in terms of open access to local, national and international research centre networks and good practice procedures;
- The capability and willingness of these intermediaries to help SMEs to get involved and take advantage of the changing innovation and knowledge creation environment, as manifested in the "open innovation" concept, in line with the ERA Green Paper and the Lisbon strategy for jobs and growth.
- Impact (economic, social and environmental) of identified support measures on SMEs.
- Recommendations for new support measures which better address the needs of SMEs.

Indicative budget<sup>2</sup>: EUR 4 million.

#### **Funding schemes that apply**

- Coordination and support actions aiming at:
  - supporting actions (studies) (call for proposals)

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<sup>2</sup> Budget provided in the current work programme for information purposes only.

**Expected impact**

These actions are expected to facilitate the creation of productive partnerships and networks to enhance the quality, performance and cost-effectiveness of SMEs output, thus empowering SMEs in a Knowledge Based Economy.



### III IMPLEMENTATION OF CALLS

#### **Call title: Coordination and Support Activity**

- **Call identifier:** FP7-SME-2009-1
- **Date of publication:** 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2008<sup>3</sup>
- **Deadline:** 27 January 2009 17.00.00 h (Brussels local time)<sup>4</sup>
- **Indicative budget<sup>5</sup>:** EUR 4 million<sup>6</sup>
- **Topics:**

Activity/ Area	Topics called	Funding Scheme
<b><u>3.1 Coordination and Support Activity</u></b>	<b>Studies on regional, national, European SME research support programmes and actions</b>	<b>Coordination and Support Action (Supporting Action) CSA-SA</b>

- **Eligibility conditions**

Funding scheme	Minimum conditions
<b>Coordination and Support Actions (supporting actions)</b>	At least 1 independent legal entity established in a MS or AC

- **Evaluation procedure:** the evaluation will follow a single stage procedure; proposals will not be evaluated anonymously.

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<sup>3</sup> The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication.

<sup>4</sup> At the time of publication of the call, the Director-General responsible may delay this deadline up to two months.

<sup>5</sup> The budget for this call is indicative. The final total budget attributed to this call, following the evaluation of projects, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call.

<sup>6</sup> Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2009 is adopted without modifications by the budget authority.

- The evaluation criteria and sub-criteria (including weights and thresholds), together with the eligibility, selection and award criteria, for the different funding schemes are set out in Annex 2 to this work programme.
- **Indicative evaluation and contractual timetable:** evaluation results estimated to be available 2 months after closure date.  
Grant agreement signature: it is estimated that the first grant agreements related to the call will come into force 6 months after the closure date.
- The forms of grants and maximum reimbursement rates which will be offered are specified in Annex 3 to the Capacities work programme.
- A reserve list of proposals will be established

**Indicative budget for the "Research for the benefit of SMEs" for the 2009 Work Programme**

	<b>2009 budget<sup>7</sup> (EUR million)</b>
<b><u>Actions 2009 Work Programme</u></b>	
<b>Coordination and Support Activity</b>	
FP7-SME-2009-1	4
<b>Evaluations (expert evaluators)</b>	1
<b>Estimated total 2009 budget allocation for WP2009</b>	<b>5</b>
<b><u>Actions 2008 Work Programme</u></b>	
<b>Research for SME Associations</b>	
FP7-SME-2008-2	78.55
<b>Support to national schemes providing financial means ("exploratory awards") to SMEs</b>	
FP7-SME-2008-3	20
<b><u>Evaluations (Expert evaluators)</u></b>	1
<b><u>Estimated total 2009 budget allocation for WP2008</u></b>	<b>99.55</b>
<b><u>Estimated total 2009 budget allocation (WP2008+WP2009)</u></b>	<b>104.55</b>

**Budget figures in this work programme**

All budgetary figures given in this work programme are indicative. Following the evaluation of proposals the final budget awarded to actions implemented through calls for proposals may vary:

- by up to 10% of the total value of the indicated budget for each call, and

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<sup>7</sup> All the appropriations are part of the 2009 work programme although also financing calls for proposals foreseen in the 2008 work programme. Budget provided in the current work programme for information purposes only

- any repartition of the call budget may also vary by up to 10% of the total value of the indicated budget for the call.

The final budgets for evaluation, monitoring and review may vary by up to 20% of the indicated budgets for these actions. The final budget awarded for all other actions not implemented through calls for proposals may vary by up to 10% of the indicated budgets for these actions.

#### **IV INDICATIVE PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE CALLS**

The current planning foresees one call or more per year for one or more of the following activities: 'Research for SMEs', 'Research for SME Associations', 'Coordination and support activities'.

The second stage of the 2008 'Research for SME Associations' call will close in May 2009. In addition, the next call for 'Research for SMEs', which will be part of the WP2010, will be published in mid-2009 and close before the end of 2009.