

WORK PROGRAMME 2007-2008

CAPACITIES

PART 3

REGIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

(European Commission C(2007)5759 of 29 November 2007)

Capacities Work Programme: Regions of Knowledge

The work programme presented here provides for two calls for proposals, one on analysis, mentoring, integration of research agendas and definition of Joint Action Plans, a second on facilitating the emergence of new regional research driven clusters and mutual exchange of information.

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3. REGIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

Objectives

Strengthening the research potential of European regions, in particular by encouraging and supporting the development, across Europe, of regional “research-driven clusters” associating research entities, enterprises and regional, local authorities.

I. CONTEXT

Policy context

The “*Regions of Knowledge*” initiative in FP7 responds to a need at European level to increase the overall capacity of regional players in enhancing science and technology based development. Its purpose is to enhance regions to strengthen their capacity for investing in and conducting research and technological development activities in a way which can contribute significantly to economic development. This then maximises the potential for a successful involvement of regional actors in European research projects and intensifies the role of RTD in economic development. It will also facilitate the development of new innovative “Research-driven Clusters”¹ at a regional level.

The "Regions of Knowledge" action will also seek to promote synergies between regional and research policies, primarily by producing regional research strategies which regional authorities can integrate into their economic development strategy as a basis for increased and more focused use of the Structural Funds as well as IPA (Instruments for Pre-accession Assistance) funds for R&D investment and activities.

Activities will be implemented in close relationship with Community regional policy (delivered through the Structural Funds, which also provide funding for research and innovation activities at regional level) and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP).

The "Regions of Knowledge" action therefore aims at:

¹ Research-driven clusters: these clusters must be composed of:

- *legal entities conducting research (universities, research organisations and research for-profit bodies) and*
- *business entities (large enterprises and SMEs as defined in the EC recommendation 2003/361/CE of 6 May 2003(OJ L124/36, 20/5/2003)) and*
- *regional/local authorities (local and regional government, regional development agencies) ;*
and where appropriate may involve local entities such as chambers of crafts, commerce and industry, financial entities (such as banks and saving banks) and consultants, operating in a particular scientific and technological domain or economic sector.

- Improving links between regional authorities, research entities and the local business community not only as partners in the development of specific goals or regional RTD policies, but also as joint partners in national or European initiatives;
- Fostering trans-national, including cross-border and inter-regional co-operations between regional partners (research entities, business entities, local and regional authorities) in creating and developing research driven clusters in areas or topics of common interest, either related to challenges from the globalisation of markets, technological change or the evolution of normative frames in the European context;
- Enhancing trans-national, including cross-border and inter-regional mutual learning of regional actors in developing or creating research driven clusters. Cross border cooperation of Regions of Knowledge is not limited to the eligible cross border regions (NUTS level III) of the Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Cohesion Policy and refers particularly to adjacent regions;
- Mentoring regions with a less developed research profile by more experienced partners through mutual exchange of experience and best practices;
- Developing joint action plans at the European level to increase regional economic competitiveness through research and technological development activities in traditional or emerging business sectors and mobilising financial possibilities afforded by national/regional authorities, the private sector and by Community programmes (RTD Framework Programme, the CIP and the Structural Funds), in order to exploit the synergy between regional, national and Community programmes for research and economic development.

The Regions of Knowledge Action will also contribute, where appropriate, to increase the capacity of less-developed European regions, particularly the convergence and the outermost regions, to participate in the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

Approach

Proposals under the "Regions of Knowledge" action will be submitted by and the selected projects will be lead by regional/local authorities involved in existing or new research-driven clusters.

Special attention will be given to innovative approaches fostering sustainable development of the economic activity, demonstrated especially through the participation of business entities that create added value in the targeted economic sector or technological domain within the regions. Research entities involved have to be already and demonstrably involved in RTD activities supported by national, regional or European programmes that are closely linked to the relevant economically relevant technological or scientific areas.

“*Regions of Knowledge*” will support:

- consortia of regional research-driven clusters from across Europe or cross-border research-driven clusters dealing with issues of common interest, such as those related to the evolution of normative frames in the European context (dialogue among stakeholders), challenges emerging from technological change or globalisation of markets or others.
- where appropriate, fostering seedbeds to create new regional research-driven clusters: the aim is to stimulate regional or local research capabilities around which research driven clusters could be set up.

The consultation process

Expert Groups' contributions have been taken into account and an FP7 Advisory Group for "Regions of Knowledge", representing public authorities and research entities has also contributed to the preparation of this action.

Activities

The 2008 Work Programme will develop the following 2 **activities**:

- Activity 3.1. Analysis, mentoring, integration of research agendas and definition of Joint Action Plans
- Activity 3.2. Facilitating the emergence of new regional research driven clusters and mutual exchange of information

II. CONTENT OF CALLS

Activity: 3.1. Analysis, mentoring, integration of research agendas and definition of Joint Action Plans

Indicative available budget EUR 9.3 million.

Technical content/scope

The "Regions of Knowledge" action supports innovative research-driven clusters in order to have more and better RTD investments at regional level. Projects must demonstrate a clear exploitation potential in the regions with which they are concerned and should help actors in the regions to make the best use of EU instruments such as the Framework Programmes, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme or the Structural Funds.

Topics: REGIONS-2008-1

In the 2008 call, proposals should address one or both of the following topics:

- **Maximising the benefits of research infrastructures² for regional economic development**

Research infrastructures³ such as laboratories, research centres, technological institutes or universities serve primarily the purpose of creating pockets of high-quality research and training. Indirect effects for the regions, e.g. an increasing employment rate of highly qualified personnel are obvious. Moreover the existence of infrastructures offers a great potential to improve the knowledge triangle within the regions, composed of a strong interaction between research, business and local/regional authorities. Access to research provision and integration of economic actors into regional research driven clusters are key challenges for enhancing the use of research infrastructures as a catalyst for economic development in the regions.

An integrative approach towards research infrastructure projects in a way that maximises the economic benefits for the regional economy is central in both Convergence and Competitiveness and Employment Regions in the Member States and Associated countries. Benchmarking

² New Research Infrastructure (RI) of pan-European interest identified in the ESFRI Roadmap, which correspond to the long term needs of the European research communities, covering all scientific areas, regardless of possible location (<http://cordis.europa.eu/esfri/roadmap.htm>), will be especially considered under this call.

³ In the scope of the Community action, as defined in the Council decision 2006/974/CE of 19/12/2006 related to the Capacities programme (OJ L 400/298, 30/12/2006), the term "research infrastructures" refers to facilities, resources and related services that are used by the scientific community to conduct top-level research in their respective fields. This definition covers: major scientific equipment or set of instruments; knowledge based-resources such as collections, archives or structured scientific information; enabling ICT-based infrastructures such as Grid, computing, software and communications; any other entity of a unique nature essential to achieve excellence in research. Such research infrastructures may be "single-sited" or "distributed" (a network of resources).

exercises on this issue will be one of the targeted objectives of this action and form part of the SWOT analysis. The potential for mutual learning among regions is enormous in this field with potential benefits for both regional competitiveness and integration of the European Research Area.

- **Regional contributions to the reduction of CO₂ emissions**

Economic development and growth is leading to an emerging demand for energy which is accompanied by increasing CO₂ emissions. The reduction of CO₂ emissions is, however, one major challenge of all Member states within the European Union as underlined by the Lisbon Strategy and the Cohesion Policy of the EU. Significant contributions of the European Regions to this objective are enhancing the use of energy efficient technologies in order to meet the increasing energy requirements of the regional actors in the most efficient way. In order to create sustainable economic and social development the regions should raise the awareness of their citizens and business entities; they should also make better use of alternative sources of energy, including renewable energies, improve their energy saving approaches and set up a secure clean energy supply. The overall objective is to reduce CO₂ emissions at regional level while preserving economic development by favouring a "system approach" which takes into account the various environmental, technical and economic aspects of the system components (renewable and energy efficient technologies or other components) situating this approach in a more global context.

Access to research provision and integration of economic actors into regional research driven clusters are key challenges to enhance the use of energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy technologies for the benefit of the regions, in particular to create a positive impact on the regional economy. Reference to changing demands for energy related sustainable agriculture should be considered especially for those economies related to rural areas (including maritime areas). Work under this action could also address energy solutions responding to SME-specific energy demands in the regions.

Projects should aim to contribute to define strategies together with action plans to reduce CO₂ emissions at Regional level. EU's regional economies will be enhanced by energy efficient technologies on the demand side (such as passive house technologies, heat pumps, hybrid technologies etc.) and/or energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies on the supply side (such as biomass, wind, hydro-, photovoltaic, etc.) through a strong interaction between research entities, business entities and local/regional authorities.

Participants

In a Regions of Knowledge proposal participants are:

Consortia of a minimum of two regional research-driven clusters or a cross-border cluster composed of a minimum of six participants from at least two different European countries, consisting of research entities, business entities and regional/local authorities.

Where appropriate, local entities such as chambers of crafts, commerce and industry, financial entities (such as saving banks and banks) and consultants, operating in a particular scientific and technological domain or economic sector, may be involved.

Type of activities/work

This Activity will be implemented through "Coordination and Support Actions" (**Support Action**), which will support projects which cover the following (to include "mentoring" where appropriate):

- **Analysis and integration of research agendas of regional or cross-border clusters**

Project partners will perform a detailed analysis of the state of play of the identified research-driven clusters or of regional/local capabilities around which research could be carried out. For the selected topic, analysis will involve the identification of relevant issues and components such as:

- The existing regional RTD policies, plans and activities relating to economic development, their evolution and their impact;
- Regional public and private RTD actors, including financial ones (e.g. banks, business angels);
- The strengths and weaknesses of the regions concerned in terms of their capacity to produce, transfer and use knowledge;
- Economic development strengths, opportunities and needs, and economic development policies;
- European and international context;
- Synergies and opportunities for mutual learning and exchange of best practices;
- Mentoring and cooperation possibilities between regional actors involved in research driven clusters.

The output shall be a directory of RTD offer and demand, a global analysis including an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) from an economic and R&D perspective and an analysis of the complementarities of the partners involved in the consortium for the particular scientific and technological domain or economic sector targeted by the project.

- **Initiatives to improve integration: definition of a Joint Action Plan**

Project partners will define a Joint Action Plan (JAP) to drive economic development through research and technological development activities in a selected topic or economic sector. This JAP may comprise regionally specific activities and will include all or some of the following measures:

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- Increasing research potential and researcher mobility, including intersectorial mobility between research and industry;
- Improving and sharing RTD infrastructure;
- Supporting relevant research projects;
- Enhancing knowledge transfer between business entities and between research entities and business entities, in particular SMEs, through networking;
- Improving availability of and access to SME support services;
- Facilitating access to private and/or public funding for RTD;
- Other relevant business support measures.

The output shall be the definition of a Joint Action Plan identifying the partners, objectives, activities (what to do), responsibilities (who does what) and schedule for trans-national and cross-regional cooperation.

The Joint Action Plan should also set out a business plan, defining how to finance the Joint Action Plan by using possibilities available at national/local level, including from the private sector, or at Community level (Framework Programmes, Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, Structural Funds). The Action Plan should make clear the complementarity between the proposed actions and the EC regional policy programmes of the region(s) concerned.

The implementation of the Joint Action Plan will **not** be funded by the “Regions of Knowledge” activity; participants should consider instead the use of financial instruments such as the Framework Programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, the Structural Funds, as well as national and regional resources and financing from the private sector, to implement the Action Plans.

- **Dissemination activities**

Conferences, workshops, publications, web-based initiatives, any other relevant events or activities including public awareness raising measures, especially among economic actors.

- **Mentoring** of regions with a less-developed research profile by highly developed ones, particularly EC convergence and outermost regions, or mutual learning

Project partners will perform actions such as: the organisations of events – including conferences, meetings, workshops or seminars, related studies, exchange of personnel, exchange and disseminations of good practices and, if necessary, the definitions, organisations and management of joint or common initiatives.

Duration:

Projects are expected to be completed normally within 36 months.

Funding scheme:

The applied funding scheme is "Coordination and Support Actions" (**Support Action**). The Community contribution to be envisaged for projects will be in the order of EUR 1 million.

The Community financial contribution may reach a maximum of 100 % of the total eligible cost.

Expected impact:

- Improving links between regional authorities, research entities and the local business community across Europe within research-driven clusters in order to promote regional economic development and competitiveness (increased cost-efficiency, increase in jobs, additional GDP or growth in VA) in a particular scientific and technological domain or economic sector;
- Delivering more effective investments in R&D at regional level through the definition and implementation of regional strategies based on business needs, which would mobilize European, national or regional funds and promote synergies notably with the Structural funds.
- Where appropriate, delivery of "guidance" solutions for technologically less developed regions, in particular convergence and outermost regions.

Activity: 3.2. Facilitating the emergence of new regional research driven clusters and mutual exchange of information

Indicative available budget EUR 0.8 million.

Technical content/scope

This Regions of Knowledge activity will provide support to foster seed-beds to create new regional research-driven clusters on the basis of support from the public and private sectors, including in emerging knowledge regions such as the convergence and outermost regions. It will also provide support for activities to promote systematic mutual information exchange as well as interactions between similar projects and where appropriate, with actions of other relevant Community programmes such as enterprise and cohesion policy (e.g. analysis and synthesis workshops, round-tables, publications), as well as the organisation of strategic workshops or the support to expert groups.

Topics – REGIONS – 2008 - 2

In the 2008 call, proposals should address one or both of the following topics, as detailed under Activity 3.1:

- **Maximising the benefits of research infrastructures for regional economic development**
- **Regional contributions to the reduction of CO₂ emissions**

Participants

In a Regions of Knowledge proposal for this activity participants must comprise:

- at least 3 participants (one research entity, one business entity and one regional/local authority) coming from the same region for "facilitating the emergence of new research driven clusters" or one regional research driven cluster for "exchange of mutual information activities".

Type of activities/work

This Activity will be implemented through "Coordination and Support Actions" (**Support Action**), which will support:

- Facilitating the creation of new regional research-driven clusters through the analysis of the economic and R&D's strengths and weaknesses of the region, the formulation of a regional research agenda as well as of an action plan of research and technological development activities, along the guidelines provided under the activity 3.1. This might include mentoring activities by a more mature cluster. In this context, attention will be given to emerging knowledge regions particularly the convergence and outermost regions;
- Analysis, workshops, conferences, roundtables, expert group meetings and dissemination activities, including web-based initiatives

Expected impact:

- Facilitating the emergence across Europe of regional research-driven clusters to promote regional economic development
- Mutual learning through information exchanges and exchange of best practices
- Involvement of more regions in the "*Regions of Knowledge*" activities

Duration:

Projects are expected to be completed normally within 24 months.

Funding schemes that apply to this activity are Coordination and Support Actions (Support Actions). The Community contribution to be envisaged for projects will be in the order of EUR 0.2 million.

The Community financial contribution may reach a maximum of 100 % of the total eligible costs.

Indicative budget⁴ for the Regions of Knowledge activity for the 2007-2008 Work Programmes

	Indicative budget 2007	Indicative budget 2008 ⁵
• Call <i>FP7-REGIONS-2007-1</i>	<i>EUR 8.80 million</i>	
• Call <i>FP7-REGIONS-2007-2</i>	<i>EUR 0.77 million</i>	<i>EUR 0.24 million</i>
• Call <i>FP7-REGIONS-2007-3</i>	<i>EUR 0.40 million</i>	
• <i>2007 Expert evaluators</i>	<i>EUR 0.20 million</i>	
• Call <i>FP7-REGIONS-2008-1</i>		<i>EUR 9.30 million</i>
• Call <i>FP7-REGIONS-2008-2</i>		<i>EUR 0.80 million</i>
• <i>2008 Expert evaluators</i>		<i>EUR 0.24 million</i>
INDICATIVE TOTAL BUDGET ALLOCATION	<i>EUR 10.17 million</i>	<i>EUR 10.58 million</i>

⁴ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2008 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority

⁵ A reserve list may be produced of projects that pass the different thresholds of the evaluation but fall below the available indicative budget of a call, in case additional budget becomes available.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF CALLS

- **Call identifier:** *FP7-REGIONS-2008-1*
- Date of publication: *30 November 2007*
- Deadline: *14 March 2008, at 17.00.00, Brussels local time*
- Indicative budget⁶: *EUR 9.3 million from 2008 budget⁷*
- Topics called:

Activity/ Area	Funding Schemes
<p><i>Regions-2008-1. Analysis, mentoring, integration of research agendas and definition of Joint Action Plans</i></p> <p>In the 2008 call, proposals should address one or both of the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising the benefits of research infrastructures for regional economic development • Regional contributions to the reduction of CO₂ emissions 	<p>CSA (Support Action)</p>

- Evaluation procedure:
 - The evaluation criteria (including weights and thresholds) and sub-criteria together with the eligibility, selection and award criteria, 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 results are estimated to be available within 4 months after the closure date; contract signature: it is estimated that the first contracts related to a call will come into force 9 months after the closure date.*
- Consortia agreements: *Participants are encouraged, but not required, to conclude a consortium agreement.*

⁶ The final budget awarded to this call, following the evaluation of projects, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call.

⁷ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2008 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority.

- Particular requirements for participation, evaluation and implementation:
 - Proposals will be submitted by and the selected projects will be lead by regional/local authorities.
 - The minimum number of participants: Consortia of a minimum of two regional research-driven clusters or a cross-border cluster composed at a minimum of six participants from at least two different European countries, consisting of research entities, business entities and regional/local authorities.
 - Research-driven clusters: these clusters must be composed of:
 - legal entities conducting research (universities, research organisations and research for-profit bodies) and
 - business entities (large enterprises and SMEs as defined in the EC recommendation 2003/361/CE of 6 May 2003(OJ L124/36, 20/5/2003)) and
 - regional/local authorities (local and regional government, regional development agencies) andwhere appropriate may involve local entities such as chambers of crafts, commerce and industry, financial entities (such as banks and saving banks) and consultants, operating in a particular scientific and technological domain or economic sector.

Restrictions on participation: *All regions in Member States, including convergence regions, and Associated Countries (including the overseas countries and territories in accordance with the EC Regulation 2007/249/CE).*

- The forms of grant and maximum reimbursement rates which will be offered are specified in Annex 3 to the Capacities work programme.

- **Call identifier: FP7-REGIONS-2008-2**
- Date of publication: 30 November 2007
- Deadline: 14 March 2008, at 17.00.00, Brussels local time
- Indicative budget⁸: EUR 0.8 million from 2008 budget⁹
- Topics called:

Activity/ Area	Funding Schemes
<p><i>Regions-2008-2. Facilitating the emergence of new regional research driven clusters and mutual exchange of information</i></p> <p>In the 2008 call, proposals should address one or both of the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising the benefits of research infrastructures for regional economic development • Regional contributions to the reduction of CO₂ emissions 	<p>CSA (Support Action)</p>

- Evaluation procedure:
 - The evaluation criteria (including weights and thresholds) and sub-criteria together with the eligibility, selection and award criteria, 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 results are estimated to be available within 4 months after the closure date; contract signature: it is estimated that the first contracts related to a call will come into force 9 months after the closure date.*
- Consortia agreements: *N.A.*
- Particular requirements for participation, evaluation and implementation:
 - Proposals will be submitted by and the selected projects will be lead by regional/local authorities.

⁸ The final budget awarded to this call, following the evaluation of projects, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call.

⁹ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2008 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority

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- The minimum number of participants must be: at least 3 participants (one research entity, one business entity and one regional/local authority) coming from the same region for "facilitating the emergence of new research driven clusters" or one research driven cluster for "exchange of mutual information activities".
- Research-driven clusters: these clusters must be composed of:
 - legal entities conducting research (universities, research organisations and research for-profit bodies) and
 - business entities (large enterprises and SMEs as defined in the EC recommendation 2003/361/CE of 6 May 2003(OJ L124/36, 20/5/2003)) and
 - regional/local authorities (local and regional government, regional development agencies) andwhere appropriate may involve local entities such as chambers of crafts, commerce and industry, financial entities (such as banks and saving banks) and consultants, operating in a particular scientific and technological domain or economic sector.

Restrictions on participation: *All regions in Member States, including convergence regions, and Associated Countries (including the overseas countries and territories in accordance with the EC Regulation 2007/249/CE).*

- The forms of grant and maximum reimbursement rates which will be offered are specified in Annex 3 to the Capacities work programme.

IV INDICATIVE PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE CALLS - 2009

In 2009 the projects are expected to address one or both of the following areas:

- **Role of knowledge producers (e.g. universities, research centres, technological institutes) for the economic development of the regions**
- **Integrated water management**