

WORK PROGRAMME 2007

CAPACITIES

PART 4

RESEARCH POTENTIAL

(European Commission C(2007)563 of 26.02.2007)

Changes to the Capacities Work Programme: Research Potential

This work programme is an update with respect to the provisional version adopted on 21 December 2006. The changes are minor typographical corrections.

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4. RESEARCH POTENTIAL

Objective:

Stimulating the realisation of the full research potential of the enlarged Union by unlocking and developing existing or emerging research potential in the European Union's convergence regions and outermost regions¹, and helping to strengthen the capacities of their researchers to successfully participate in research activities at EU level.

I CONTEXT

Policy context

Europe does not fully exploit its research potential, in particular in less advanced regions remote from the European core of research and industrial development. In order to help researchers and institutions, whether in the public or private sector, of these regions to contribute to the overall European research effort, while taking advantage of the knowledge and experience existing in other regions of Europe, this action aims at establishing the conditions that will allow them to exploit their potential and will help to fully realise the European Research Area in the enlarged Union.

Approach

In order to support the realisation of the full research potential of the enlarged European Research Area, a dedicated action will seek to unlock the potential of research groups in the convergence regions and outermost regions of the European Union, that are currently not using their possibilities to the full or that are in need of new knowledge and support to realise their potential.

By focusing on the strengthening of the research and technological development capacities of the selected research entities and on the development of collaboration between them and excellent research entities elsewhere in the EU, the action will contribute to the setting-up of strategic partnerships, enabling the selected research entities to realise their full potential. The action will also complement the investments in research capacity co-financed through the EU cohesion policy programmes for 2007-2013.

¹ Convergence regions are listed in the C(2006) 3475 and are defined as those regions having per capita gross domestic product (GDP) less than 75 % of the average GDP of the EU-25. Subject to international instruments associating third countries to the 7th EC Framework Programme, other regions may become eligible for participation; the modalities for the identification of eligible regions would be defined in these international instruments.

Outermost regions are defined according to the article 299§2 of the EC Treaty: Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique and Réunion (the four French overseas departments), the Canaries (Spain), and the Azores and Madeira (Portugal).

The consultation process

Previous Expert Group conclusions have been taken into account and a FP7 Advisory Group for "Research Potential", representing public authorities and research entities has been created and consulted.

Activities

The 2007 Work Programme will develop the following **activities**:

- Activity: 4.1.Unlocking and developing the research potential in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions;
- Activity: 4.2.Providing evaluation facilities for research organisation in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions;

Other activities

Trans-national co-operation among NCPs

REGPOT-2007-4

Description:

Reinforcing the network of National Contact Points (NCP) for the Seventh Framework Programme under "Research Potential", by promoting trans-national co-operation. The action will focus on identifying and sharing good practices. This may entail various mechanisms such as benchmarking, joint workshops, training, and twinning schemes. Practical initiatives to benefit cross-border audiences may also be included, such as trans-national brokerage events. The specific approach should be adapted to the nature of the theme and to the capacities and priorities of the NCPs concerned.

Special attention will be given to helping less experienced NCPs rapidly acquire the know-how accumulated in other countries.

Proposals are expected to include all NCPs who have been officially appointed by the relevant national authorities. Other participants from the EU and associated countries are ineligible. If certain NCPs wish to abstain from participating, this fact should be explicitly documented in the proposal.

The action should also involve official FP7 contacts from Associated Countries.

The Commission expects to select a single proposal under this heading.

Funding scheme: Co-ordination and support action (coordination action); indicative budget: 0.5 M €. It is expected that the project should last for a maximum of 5 years, and should in any case finish before March 2013.

Expected impact:

- An improved NCP service across Europe, therefore helping simplify access to FP7 calls, lowering the entry barriers for newcomers, and raising the average quality of submitted proposals.
- A more consistent level of NCP support services across Europe.

International Cooperation

REGPOT-2007-3

Objectives:

To contribute to the realisation of the FP7's international dimension by implementing actions - under the 'Research Potential' activity - promoting closer S&T cooperation opportunities between Europe and the Western Balkan Countries (WBC). This could improve the WBC participation in the RTD Framework Programme and favour brain-gain environments through trans-national two-way exchanges of research staff between centres established in the EU's convergence and outermost region's, in other European regions and in the WBC.

The resulting cooperation will be based on a mutual benefit approach within the perspective of further integration of the Balkan region into the European Research Area (ERA) and therefore the European RTD activities and networks.

Justification:

The EU-Western Balkan Countries' S&T Ministers acknowledged - during the June 2003 ministerial Conference in Thessaloniki - the important role RTD invests for the economic growth, the stabilisation and the resolution of problems in the Western Balkan region as well as the necessity to develop strong S&T partnerships in a short term period and to mobilise the necessary funds.

A S&T co-operation policy and an Action plan were adopted identifying the following 4 priority activities: reinforcement of Western Balkan Countries (WBC) research infrastructure; improvement of their Human Potential; institution building; and promotion of joint RTD activities of mutual benefit and regional impact between the EU and the WBC. During the Conference organised by the European Parliament on February 3, 2005, the Ministers confirmed again their willingness to progressively integrate the WBC in the European Research Area and to strengthen the research capabilities of the most promising scientific centres of this region.

The Research Potential international dimension component targets several identified needs listed in the above mentioned Action plan in terms of Human and material capacities improvement, scientific networking and exchange of know-how and experience.

Description:

This activity will provide the opportunity to develop partnerships through actions with existing or emerging centres of excellence established in the EU's convergence and outermost regions, the Member States and the WBC. This will be realised by improving scientific relationships, networking and development of the S&T Human Potential, exchanging of know-how and experience between the countries concerned as well as by upgrading the S&T research capacities of highest quality and/or promising centres in the WBC. Improvements should be aimed at adjusting Western Balkan RTD centres' policies, boosting their scientific and technological research potential, and developing links between their scientific communities and those of Member States.

Proposals may apply to any research topic promoted under the EC FP7. Proposals should include at least 3 participants: one from a convergence or outermost region in the EU, one from another Member State and one from a WBC.

Funding scheme: Co-ordination and Support Action (Support Action); indicative budget in 2007: 8 M€. The average Community contribution per Co-ordination and Support action will be approximately 1,2 million €. The project duration will be up to 3 years at the maximum.

Expected impact:

- Accelerate the setting up of sustainable partnerships between the most competitive RTD centres of EU's convergence and outermost regions, Member States and Western Balkan Countries whilst boosting regional cooperation contributing to socio-economic needs;
- Reinforce the research centres established in the EU's convergence and outermost regions through international co-operation networking integrating exchange of scientific know-how, mobilisation of Human Potential and exploitation of RTD results;
- Improving and/or enlarging the RTD capacity of Western Balkan centres of competence in terms of S&T policy and research programmes, scientific and technical human resources and S&T infrastructures;
- Better and more integrate Western Balkan countries in the FP7 networks and RTD projects as well as in the Member State's national cooperation programmes as a prerequisite of these countries successful integration into the European Research Area.

II CONTENT OF CALLS IN 2007

Activity: 4.1.Unlocking and developing the research potential in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions

Indicative available budget: 23.5 M€.

Technical content/scope :

Topics - REGPOT-2007-1

This activity will give the possibility to improve the research capacities of highest quality and/or promising centres, in the thematic priorities' domains of the FP7, by reinforcing their S&T potential, by supporting and mobilising the human and material resources, by developing strategic partnerships (including twinning) with well established research groups elsewhere in the Union, by disseminating scientific information as well as the results of research, by facilitating communication between the centres having similar scientific interest and by improving their responses to socio-economic needs of the country.

Topics: Any research topic covered by the EC FP7.

Participants

Any public or private research entity in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions being defined as an existing working unit (a single proposer), either independent or functioning within a locally established research organisation in the concerned regions, having preferably distinct organisational and administrative boundaries. This entity should not be a subsidiary or branch of an organisation established in another country.

Type of activities

This activity will support an Action Plan defined by the concerned research centres, which will be based on a coherent set of measures for:

- **Exchange of know-how and experience** through trans-national two-way secondments of research staff between the selected centres in the qualifying regions and one or more partner organisations in another EU State, with in-built obligatory return mechanisms for seconded staff originating from the selected centres in the qualifying regions;
- **Recruitment by the selected centres of incoming experienced researchers**, including managers, also as a mean to particularly encourage the return of nationals having left the country;
- **Acquisition, development or upgrading of research equipment** for the selected centres;
- **Organisation of workshops and conferences** to facilitate knowledge transfer at regional, national and international level involving both the selected centres' own research staff and invited researchers, from other countries in the frame of the development of the selected centres' international training capacity and reputation; participation of the research staff of the centres selected under the scheme at international conferences or short term training events, for knowledge sharing, network building and to expose them to a more international environment;

- **Dissemination and promotional activities** to ensure increased visibility of the selected centres and their activities.

Projects will also complement actions for research centres co-financed through the cohesion policy programmes for 2007-2013 (specifically through the European Regional Development Fund). The research centres involved in this action should explain the synergies between the measures set out in the Action Plan for their centre and actions supported or to be supported through the cohesion policy programmes, whether in terms of human resources, the acquisition, development or upgrading of research equipment or activities for knowledge transfer.

Duration

Projects are expected to be completed normally within 36 months.

Funding Schemes that apply:

The Funding scheme for this activity is "**Coordination and Support Actions**" (Support Actions).

The Community contribution to be envisaged for Coordination and Support Actions (Support Actions) will range approximately from EUR 1 to 1.2 Million €.

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

Expected impact:

- Upgrading the RTD capacity (human potential: number of new researchers and training of all research staff, scientific equipment) and the quality of research carried out by the selected research entity;
- Better integration of the selected research team in the European Research Area as a whole (partnership, including twinning with research groups elsewhere in Europe);
- Improvement of the capacity of its participation in FP7 projects.
- Better regional research capacity to improve economic and social cohesion.

Activity: 4.2. Providing evaluation facilities for research organisation in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions

Indicative available budget: 1 M€.

Technical content/ scope:

Topics - REGPOT-2007-2

This activity will provide evaluation facilities through which any research entity in the qualifying regions, whether or not applying for funding under Activity 4.1, could obtain an international independent expert evaluation of the level of their overall research quality and infrastructures and define an Action Plan to improve their research capacities.

Topics: Any research topic covered by the EC FP7.

Participants

Any public or private research entity in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions being defined as an existing working unit (a single proposer), either independent or functioning within a locally established research organisation in the concerned regions, having preferably distinct organisational and administrative boundaries. This entity should not be a subsidiary or branch of an organisation established in another country.

Type of activities

High level independent experts, nominated by the Commission will evaluate the level of the research quality and infrastructures of the selected applicants (SWOT analysis). On the basis of this evaluation, preparation by the selected centre of an Action Plan to upgrade and reinforce its RTD potential.

Projects will also complement actions for research centres co-financed through the cohesion policy programmes for 2007-2013 (specifically through the European Regional Development Fund.

Duration

Projects are expected to be completed normally within 12 months.

Funding Schemes that apply :

The Funding scheme for this activity is "**Coordination and Support Actions**" (Support Actions).

The Community contribution to be envisaged for Coordination and Support Actions (Support Actions) will range up to 0.2 M €.

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

Expected impact:

- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and conclusions
- An Action Plan to improve the research centres' RTD capacity
- Improvement of their research capacity for better participation in EU research initiatives and increased economic cohesion.

Activity: 4.3. International Co-operation

Indicative available budget: 8 M€.

Technical content/ scope:

REGPOT-2007-3

This activity will provide the opportunity to develop partnerships through actions with existing or emerging centres of excellence established in the EU's convergence and outermost regions, the Member States and the Western Balkan Countries (WBC). This will be realised by improving networking and exchange of know-how and experience between the countries concerned as well as by upgrading the research capacities of highest quality and/or promising centres in the WBC, in any research topic covered by the EC FP7.

In this context, support will be given to S&T potential reinforcement of the WBC (in order to create higher added value and competitive advantages for the region); the strengthening of the scientific relationships and networking; the exchange of know-how and sharing of experiences between the EU's convergence and outermost regions, the Member States and the WBC; the mobilisation and improvement of their respective S&T Human Potential; and the exploitation of RTD results.

Topics: Any research topic covered by the EC FP7.

Participants

The proposal should include at least 3 participants: one from a convergence or outermost region in a Member State, one from another Member State and one from a Western Balkan Country.

The participants should be public or private existing research centres in the EU's convergence and outermost regions as well as all other regions and the WBC. They should be defined as a working unit, either independent or functioning within a locally established research organisation in the concerned countries, having preferably distinct organisational and administrative boundaries. The participants should not be a subsidiary or branch of an organisation established in another country.

Type of activities

This activity will support an Action Plan defined by the concerned research centres, which

will be based on a coherent set of twinning measures for:

- Exchange of know-how and experience between the research centres in Member States and those of the Western Balkan Countries through trans-national two-way secondments of research staff between the selected centres, with in-built obligatory return mechanisms. Training in Member States for Ph.D. students and/or post-doctoral researchers: sending scientists from the Western Balkan centres for short stays, to laboratories abroad, either for specialised training or to carry out a specific research experiment or to prepare cooperative activities and/or joint RTD proposals;
- Recruitment by the WBC selected centres of incoming experienced researchers, including as a mean to particularly encourage the return of nationals having left the country, for teaching, training and/or joint research activities; and hiring of new young researchers to reinforce the human potential of the Western Balkan centres.
- Acquisition, development, maintenance, upgrading and/or renewal of S&T research equipment for the selected WBC research centres;
- Organisation of workshops and conferences to facilitate knowledge transfer at national and international level involving both the selected centres' own research staff and invited researchers, from other countries in the frame of the development of the selected centres' international training capacity and reputation; participation of the research staff of the centres selected under the scheme at international conferences or short term training events, for knowledge sharing, network building and to expose them to a more international environment;
- Dissemination and promotional activities to ensure increased visibility of the selected centres and their activities.

Duration

The duration of a project could be up to 36 months.

Funding Schemes that apply:

The Funding scheme for this activity is "Coordination and Support Actions" (Support actions).

The Community contribution to be envisaged for Coordination and Support Actions will range approximately to 1,2 Million €.

The Community financial contribution may cover up to 100% of the cost of the action.

Expected impact:

- Accelerate the setting up of sustainable partnerships between the most competitive RTD centres of EU's convergence and outermost regions, Member States and Western Balkan Countries whilst boosting regional cooperation contributing to socio-economic needs;

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- Improving and/or enlarging the RTD capacity of Western Balkan centres of competence in terms of S&T policy and research programmes, scientific and technical human resources and S&T infrastructures;
- Better and more integrate Western Balkan countries in the FP7 networks and RTD projects as well as in the Member State's national cooperation programmes as a prerequisite of these countries successful integration into the European Research Area.

Indicative budget for the Research Potential activity for the 2007 Work Programme

2007 M€

- Call *FP7-REGPOT-2007-1* 23.5 M€
- Call *FP7-REGPOT-2007-2* 1 M€
- Call *FP7-REGPOT-2007-3* 8 M€
- Call *FP7-REGPOT-2007-4* 0.5 M€
- *Experts evaluators* 403 284 €

INDICATIVE TOTAL BUDGET 33.403 284 M€
ALLOCATION

III IMPLEMENTATION OF CALLS

Please note that the call fiche has been updated with respect to the provisional version published on CORDIS on 22 December 2006. There are no substantive modifications.

- **Call identifier:** *FP7-REGPOT-2007-1*
- Date of publication: *22 December 2006*
- Deadline: *24 April 2007, at 17 h, Brussels local time*
- Indicative budget: *23.5 M€ from 2007 budget*
- Topics called:

| Activity/ Area | Topics called | Funding Schemes |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <i>REGPOT-2007-1. Unlocking and developing the research potential in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions</i> | <i>Any research topic covered by the EC FP7.</i> | <i>CSAs (Support Actions)</i> |

- 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 3 months after the closure dates; contract signature: it is estimated that the first contracts related to a call will come into force 8 months after the closure dates.*
- Consortia agreements: *N.A.*
- Particular requirements for participation, evaluation and implementation:

The projects should be single legal entity

Restrictions on participation: *EU Convergence regions and outermost regions*

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

Please note that the call fiche has been updated with respect to the provisional version published on CORDIS on 22 December 2006. There are no substantive modifications.

- **Call identifier:** *FP7-REGPOT-2007-2*
- Date of publication: *22 December 2006*
- Deadline: *24 April 2007, at 17 h, Brussels local time*
- Indicative budget: *1 M€ from 2007 budget*

- Topics called:

| Activity/ Area | Topics called | Funding Schemes |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <i>REGPOT-2007-2. Providing evaluation facilities for research organisation in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions</i> | <i>Any research topic covered by the EC FP7.</i> | <i>CSAs (Support Actions)</i> |

- 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 3 months after the closure dates; contract signature: it is estimated that the first contracts related to a call will come into force 8 months after the closure dates.*
- Consortia agreements: *N.A.*
- Particular requirements for participation, evaluation and implementation:

The projects should be single legal entity

Restrictions on participation: *EU's Convergence regions and outermost regions*

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

Please note that the call fiche has been updated with respect to the provisional version published on CORDIS on 22 December 2006. There are no substantive modifications.

- **Call identifier: FP7-REGPOT-2007-3**
- Date of publication: 22 December 2006
- Deadline: 24 April 2007, at 17 h, Brussels local time
- Indicative budget: 8 M€ from 2007 budget
- Topics called:

| Activity/ Area | Topics called | Funding Schemes |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| REGPOT-2007-3. International Co-operation | Any research topic covered by the EC FP7. | CSAs (Support Actions) |

- 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 dates; contract signature: it is estimated that the first contracts related to a call will come into force 9 months after the closure dates.*
- Consortia agreements: *N.A.*
- Particular requirements for participation, evaluation and implementation:

The minimum number of participants:

- *At least one participant from a convergence or outermost region in a Member State, one from another Member State and one from a Western Balkan Country.*

Restrictions on participation: Member States and Western Balkan Countries.

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

Please note that the call fiche has been updated with respect to the provisional version published on CORDIS on 22 December 2006. There are no substantive modifications.

- Call identifier: **FP7-REGPOT-2007-4**
- Date of publication: 22 December 2006
- Deadline: 24 April 2007, at 17 h, Brussels local time
- Indicative budget: 0.5 M€ from 2007 budget

- Topics called:

| Activity/ Area | Funding Schemes |
|---|--------------------------------|
| REGPOT-2007-4. Trans-national co-operation among NCPs | CSAs (Coordination Actions) |

- 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 3 months after the closure dates; contract signature: it is estimated that the first contracts related to a call will come into force 8 months after the closure dates.*
- Consortia agreements: *N.A.*
- Particular requirements for participation, evaluation and implementation:

Restrictions on participation: *Host NCP organisations only*

- 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

2008 Projects will address the same activities "Unlocking and developing the research potential in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions" and "Providing evaluation facilities for research organisation in the EU's convergence regions and outermost regions".