

WORK PROGRAMME 2012¹

CAPACITIES

(European Commission C(2011)5023 of 19 July 2011)

¹ In accordance with Articles 179 to 190 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 182(1) as contextualised in the following decisions: Decision 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18/12/2006 concerning the 7th Framework Programme of the European Community for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration (2007 – 2013) and the Council Decision 2006/974/EC of 19/12/2006 adopting a Specific Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration 'Capacities' (2007 – 2013).

Capacities Work Programme

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i. General Introduction

This is the work programme for 2012 for the Capacities Specific Programme of the 7th Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities.

The work programme was adopted by the Commission, with the assistance of the Programme Committee.

This work programme provides additional detail of the implementation of the Specific Programme, setting out information on the priorities, objectives and policy relevance of the research topics which will be implemented through calls for proposals in the latter half of 2011 and in 2012.

The Capacities work programme is structured around 7 chapters, setting out the implementation of the parts. In general, each chapter is self-standing; however, applicants are advised to read this general introduction in addition to the chapter(s) containing the part(s) of interest. A range of issues of relevance to the Capacities work programme as a whole are also set out in Annexes 1-3.

In its recent communication on **the Innovation Union Flagship Initiative**², adopted in the context of the EU's new growth and jobs strategy '**Europe 2020**'³ and fully endorsed by the Competitiveness Council⁴ and by the European Council⁵, the Commission calls for a strategic and integrated approach to boosting innovation, whereby all relevant policies and instruments are designed to contribute to innovation. The aim is to promote a broad concept of innovation, aiming at competitiveness while also addressing societal challenges. Research and innovation represent the engine of economic growth: innovative ideas that can be turned into new marketable products and services help create growth and quality jobs.

To fully accomplish the Innovation Union the framework conditions need to be improved: standard settings, better access to finance, particularly for SMEs, affordable IPR and effective knowledge market, smarter and more ambitious regulations, public procurements. In this context, the EU programmes should ensure simpler access and stronger involvement to SMEs and enhance their leverage effects on private sector investment, with the support of the European Investment Bank; a smart regional specialisation strategy should be the base of the development of research and innovation capacities; social innovation should be fostered and international collaboration enhanced. The involvement and full support of all actors and stakeholders is required, at all levels (EU, National, and Regional) and from all sectors (private, public, industry, research, academic, services).

The implementation of the Innovation Union and its commitments have a long-term dimension, and will be considered in the definition of the new Common Strategic Framework⁶ but already now the first steps can be made. Where appropriate and within the existing legal framework, the

² "Europe 2020 Flagship initiative Innovation Union' COM(2010) 546 of 6.10.2010

³ 'Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' COM(2010) 2020 of 3.3.2010.

⁴ Council conclusion of 26 November 2010

⁵ European Council conclusions of 4 February 2011

⁶ Green paper 'From Challenges to opportunities: towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding' COM(2011) 48

2012 work programmes of Capacities have been designed to support the implementation of the Innovation Union Initiative: in particular through different risk-sharing mechanism, a portfolio approach and the introduction of a first-piece loss approach addressing the need of Research Infrastructures and SMEs in part 1; the support to SMEs for demonstration activities in Part 2; the role of research driven clusters in facilitating the knowledge transfer for academia to industry in Part 3; one measure of the Action Plan applying to the organisation of the innovation capacity building of the applicants and the management of their Intellectual Property in Part 4; a specific focus on fast growing innovative companies enterprises which are in majority SME in part 6 and actions to strengthen European research facilities in third countries and joint European S&T centres in third countries in Part 7.

In preparing this work programme, the Commission has relied on advice from a wide range of consultations, including from specific advice of a series of advisory groups⁷. The advisory groups are groups of independent, high-level, experts which have been set up by the Commission to advise on the implementation of the European Union's research policy in all parts contained in this work programme, except for Support to the coherent development of research policies. The experts were chosen based on their knowledge, skills and significant experience in the field of research and aligned issues covered by the Parts. More information on the members, and the work, of the advisory groups can be found on the Europa website.

In the implementation of the Capacities Specific Programme, attention is also paid to the working conditions, transparency of recruitment processes, and career development as regards the researchers recruited on projects and programmes funded, for which the Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers⁸ offers a reference framework, while respecting its voluntary nature.

This work programme, in particular parts 1 (Research Infrastructures), 2 (Research for the benefit of SMEs), 3 (Regions of Knowledge) and 4 (Research Potential), can also contribute to allow the enhancement of synergies and complementarities between FP7 and Cohesion Policy investments in research and innovation⁹ as described in the related communication from the Commission^{10 11}.

This work programme contributes to meeting the overarching objective of EU research policy to develop an open and competitive European Research Area (ERA), an essential element of the Innovation Union flagship Communication, characterized by research excellence and the free circulation of researchers, knowledge and technology at the heart of a single EU market for research and innovation. The main premise of ERA is to realise critical research mass and economies of scale unattainable at national level and to overcome deficiencies and inefficiencies arising from fragmentation, sub-criticality and duplication in R&D activities, and from a lack of policy coherence and coordination at and between regional, national and European levels.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/advisory_en.html

⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/eracareers/europeancharter>

⁹ See also the "Practical guide to EU funding for Research, Development and Innovation" which sets out the complementarity of EU support for RTDI through the 7th Framework programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation programme and the Structural Funds (http://cordis.europa.eu/EU-funding-guide/home_en.html).

¹⁰ COM (2007) 474 of 16.8.2007.

¹¹ In this context project applicants are encouraged to check the operational programme for the Structural funds applicable in their region (see: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/fiche_index_en.htm)

Tackling these depends upon the extent to which high-level political/ ministerial commitment¹² is matched by concerted action and sustainable partnerships between the Member States and the European Commission and corresponding concrete research activities involving stakeholders.

This work programme also emphasises the innovation potential of research, including, where relevant, a focus on helping to solve major societal challenges as highlighted in the Europe 2020 strategy. The ever increasing importance of harnessing the innovation-driven growth and jobs potential of research in building a knowledge-intensive economy takes on a special significance in the economic crisis as a means of mitigating its effects and ensuring a rapid recovery in the next economic upswing.

By funding excellent state-of-the-art research in key priority areas and pooling research resources, this work programme helps to boost R&D and innovation investments in Europe, fosters better integration of European R&D, and raises research excellence.

More specifically, the overall aim of the Capacities programme is to enhance research and innovation efforts throughout Europe, attaining where possible world leadership. This is achieved by supporting a wide range of initiatives: to optimize new and existing research infrastructures in Europe; to strengthen the innovation capacity of SMEs; to enhance the research potential of European regions and research-driven clusters; to unlock the research potential of the EU's convergence and outermost regions; to stimulate the harmonious integration of scientific and technological endeavor into European society; to improve the coherence of national and European Union research policies; and to build strategic R&D partnerships with non-EU countries. Thus, by increasing the impact of public research and its links with industry, and by strengthening public support and its leverage effect on investment by private actors, the Capacities programme is a key element to the further development of ERA and of a single market for research and innovation.

Scope of Work Programme

The scope of this work programme corresponds to that defined in the Capacities Specific Programme. The calls for proposals planned within this work programme are those which are scheduled to be launched in the second half of 2011 and in 2012.

Gender

The pursuit of scientific knowledge and its technical application towards society requires the talent, perspectives and insight that can only be assured by increasing diversity in the research workforce. Therefore, all projects are encouraged to have a balanced participation of women and men in their research activities and to raise awareness on combating gender prejudices and stereotypes. When human beings are involved as users, gender differences may exist. These will be addressed as an integral part of the research to ensure the highest level of scientific quality. In addition, specific actions to promote gender equality in research can be financed as part of the proposal, as specified in Appendix 7 of the Negotiation Guidance Notes.¹³

Ethical Aspects

¹² As in the Ljubljana Process, Council Conclusions on the Launch of the "Ljubljana Process"- towards full realisation of ERA, 30 May 2008.

¹³ Available from http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/find-doc_en.html

All research carried out under this work programme must respect fundamental ethical principles, and the requirements set out in the text of the Capacities Specific Programme. More information on the procedures for the peer review of submitted proposals is given in the 'Rules for Submission of Proposals and the Related, Evaluation, Selection and Award Procedures'.

The Commission is fully committed to the principles set out in:

- a) The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union as well as in the relevant EU legislation
- b) The declaration on the use of human embryonic stem cells, as set out in the annex to the Commission Communication COM(2006)548 of 26 September 2006. This states that the Commission will maintain the practice of the 6th Framework Programme. Accordingly the Commission will not fund projects which destroy human embryos, including for the procurement of stem cells. The exclusion of funding of this step of research will not prevent European Union funding of subsequent steps involving human embryonic stem cells.

Support under the Capacities programme

This specific programme will support a range of actions involving the active collaboration of research teams from all sectors, including industry, SMEs, universities and other higher education institutions, research institutes and centres, international European interest organisations, civil society organisations, and any other legal entities. These actions will be implemented through the funding schemes: Collaborative Projects; Networks of Excellence; Coordination Support Actions and Research for the benefit of Specific Groups (in particular SMEs). Researchers based in Associated Countries may take part in the Capacities programme on the same basis and with the same rights and obligations as those based in Member States unless otherwise stated. International cooperation represents an important dimension of all research activities carried out in the Capacities Programme.

All activities will be open to participation by legal entities from third countries. This concerns both International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC, full list provided in Annex I) and other third countries, including the associated countries. Organisations from associated and ICPC countries are eligible for funding in all cases. Organisations from other third countries are eligible for funding under the conditions laid down in Art 29 (2) of the Rules for Participation. There is provision for the financing of the participation of research partners from the ICPC countries from the FP7 budget. Some topics of the work programme, in areas of mutual interest and benefit, may target the participation of specific third countries. The participation of third countries may also be implemented in the form of coordinated or joint calls. Chapter 7 of this work programme focuses specifically on a range of activities designed to support and stimulate the participation of third countries in the Framework Programme.

Coordination of non-European Union Research Programmes

The coordination of non-European Union research programmes is an important and integral part of the development of the European Research Area. Actions foreseen in the Capacities work programme will make use of two specific approaches – the ERA-NET scheme and the participation of the European Union in jointly implemented national research programmes (through Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

In this work programme only ERA NETs which are within the scope of one of the parts will be supported and any call is clearly indicated in that part.

Risk-Sharing Finance Facility

Enhancing access to finance for Research and Innovation (R&I) activities is key to achieve the objective of the Innovation Union Flagship Initiative¹⁴ and bring 'ideas to market'. The European added-value of public support consists in overcoming market deficiencies for the financing of riskier European actions of R&I, which often involve a high level of risk¹⁵.

In accordance with Annex III of the Capacities Specific Programme, the European Union has provided a contribution to the European Investment Bank (EIB) for a Risk Sharing Finance Facility (RSFF) with a view to fostering primarily private sector investment in research, technological development and demonstration (RTD) as well as innovation. This new financing instrument has been designed by the European Investment Bank with the support of the European Commission.

In compliance with the Capacities Specific Programme, the development of research infrastructures funded by the European Union under this Specific programme shall be automatically eligible for the RSFF. Other research infrastructures responding to European research principles and criteria could also be considered. Legal entities established in third countries other than Associated countries are also eligible if they participate in FP7 indirect actions and their costs are eligible for European Union funding, or, in the case of Research Infrastructures, if the beneficiary is able to demonstrate that either the infrastructure(s) ownership or operation(s) involve, or will involve, independent legal entities in at least three Member States or Associated States, or the infrastructure(s) services are, or will be, used or requested for use by research communities from at least three Member States or Associated Countries.

For the period 2011-2013, following the positive results of the RSFF interim evaluation, the EU is expected to release a contribution of EUR 500 million to RSFF, as foreseen in the RSFF legal basis¹⁶. For the period 2012-2013, it is expected that the EU will transfer EUR 50 million (broken down as follows: in 2012: EUR 0 million; in 2013: EUR 50 million) to the EIB¹⁷ from the Capacities Specific Programme (Research Infrastructures).

¹⁴ European Commission Communication on 'Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union' (COM(2010) 546 final, 6 October 2010).

¹⁵ In terms of current added value, the Independent Experts Group in charge of the RSFF interim evaluation in 2010 (IEG) notably underlined that "*the RSFF has been one of the most successful instruments for addressing market imperfections in the debt financing of RDI investments in Europe. As the financial crisis unfolded, the market imperfections with respect to loan finance for RDI investments did not just increase substantially, they became to some extent ubiquitous. RSFF remained one of the few financial instruments available to innovative firms and organisations. RSFF helped many European research intensive forms to maintain RDI activities in period of major financial stress (...). It has provided loan finance to those innovative SMEs not interested in private equity funding*".

¹⁶ The EU contribution to RSFF is expected to come from the following sources for the period 2011-2013: EUR 400 million from the Specific Programme "Cooperation" and EUR 100 million from the Specific Programme "Capacities".

¹⁷ Under the condition that the legislative authority releases the overall budgetary envelope of EUR 200 million for the RSFF for the period 2007-2011, as specified under Annex II of the Specific Programme "Capacities", among which EUR 150 million have been committed in the 2007-2011 period. This amount for 2013

Responding to the recommendation of the independent expert group in charge of the interim evaluation of the RSFF for a better support to Research Infrastructures, the Commission fully endorses the recommendations of the experts to address the needs of currently underrepresented groups in RSFF (e.g. research infrastructures) before end of 2013. The 2012 Work Programme will therefore prepare to enhance the access to RSFF finance for Research Infrastructures through the introduction of targeted improvements (for example, a change of risk-sharing and the introduction of a first-loss piece approach, as described in part 1).

Further information on the Risk-Sharing Finance Facility is given in part 1 of this work programme.

Submitting a Proposal

Proposals should be submitted in accordance with the terms set out in a call for proposals. In order to submit a proposal, applicants should consult the following documents:

- The text of the call for proposals, as announced in the Official Journal of the European Union and published on the specific Internet pages of the Seventh Framework Programme;
- This work programme; and
- The relevant Guide for Applicants

There are also a number of other useful texts, which applicants could refer to, including the Specific Programme 'Cooperation', the Rules for Participation for FP7, the 'Rules for Submission of Proposals and the Related, Evaluation, Selection and Award Procedures', and the Commission Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. These documents, and other relevant background documents, are available on the Internet pages of the Seventh Framework Programme. The forms of the grant which will be used and the maximum reimbursement rates for projects funded through the Capacities work programme are set out in Annex 3 and are applicable to actions as a result of calls for proposals and grants to identified beneficiaries, unless indicated otherwise in the different Parts. Participants have the possibility to use flat rates to cover subsistence costs incurred by beneficiaries during travel carried out within grants for indirect actions.

In addition, every Member State and Associated country has appointed a set of National Contact Points (NCPs) to assist potential and successful applicants. There is a NCP for each of the parts of the Capacities Programme, except for Support to the Coherent Development of Research Policies'. Applicants are encouraged to make contact with the relevant NCP from their country.

Evaluation Criteria and Related Issues

The 'Rules for Submission of Proposals and the Related, Evaluation, Selection and Award Procedures' set out the basic procedures to be followed by all programmes under the 7th Framework Programme.

corresponds to primary-credit appropriations. It will be complemented by an additional amount (corresponding to the allocation to RSFF of the EFTA credits.) It may be further increased by other Third Countries appropriations

The set of eligibility and evaluation criteria for this work programme is given in Annex 2 and is applicable to actions as a result of calls for proposals and grants to identified beneficiaries¹⁸, unless indicated otherwise in the different Parts. Any deviations or complementary criteria, which may apply, are clearly set out in the relevant chapter of this work programme and in the text of the calls for proposals.

All proposals which deal with ethical issues and all proposals for which ethical concerns have been identified during the evaluation process may be reviewed by a separate ethical evaluation panel, before they can be selected for funding. Further information on this ethical review and all aspects of the evaluation procedure are given in the 'Rules for Submission of Proposals and the Related, Evaluation, Selection and Award Procedures'.

The work programmes, and consequently the calls for proposals, may specify and restrict the participation of legal entities, according to their activity and type, or according to the funding scheme used.

Calls for proposals may involve a two-stage submission and/or a two-step evaluation procedure. When such a procedure is employed, this is clearly stated in the text of the call for proposals and the Guides for Applicants. More information on two-stage submission and two-step evaluation is given in the 'Rules for Submission of Proposals and the Related, Evaluation, Selection and Award Procedures'.

In carrying out the evaluations of proposals received, the Commission may choose to send the proposals to external experts, or to make the proposals available electronically, so that the experts may carry out their examination and review of the proposals at their home and/or their place of work.

Registration of legal entities in the Commission's Early Warning System (EWS) and Central Exclusion Database (CED).

The Commission uses an internal information tool (EWS), as well as a database available to public authorities implementing EU funds (CED) to flag identified risks related to beneficiaries of centrally managed contracts and grants with a view to protecting the EU's financial interests.

Prior Information of Candidates, Tenderers and Grant Applicants (Article 8 of Decision on the EWS and Article 13 of Regulation on the Central Exclusion Database):

Candidates, tenderers, grant applicants and, if they are legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over them, are informed that, should they be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (EWS) for the use of authorising officers of the Commission and the executive agencies (OJ, L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 125), or

¹⁸ According to Article 13 and Article 14 (a) of Regulation No 1906/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 laying down the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities in actions under the Seventh Framework Programme and for the dissemination of research results (2007-2013) OJ L391 of 30.12.2006.

- the Commission Regulation of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database – CED (OJ L 344, 20.12.2008, p. 12),

their personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the EWS only or both in the EWS and CED, and communicated to the persons and entities listed in the above-mentioned Decision and Regulation, in relation to the award or the execution of a procurement contract or a grant agreement or decision¹⁹.

Budget Figures in This Work Programme

This work programme draws on financing from the 2012 budgetary year. All budgetary figures given in this work programme are indicative and subject to the condition that the draft budget 2012 is adopted without modifications by the Budgetary Authority.

Unless otherwise stated, final budgets may vary following the evaluation of proposals.

The final budget awarded to actions implemented through calls for proposals may vary:

- The total budget of the call may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the indicated budget for each call; and
- Any repartition of the call budget may also vary by up to 10% of the total value of the indicated budget for the call.

For actions not implemented through calls for proposals:

- 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 budget for these actions.

¹⁹ More information on the EWS and CED, can be found here:
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm