

European Commission



Guidance note

“Large RTD Actions”

Periodic call for proposals

January 2001



COMPETITIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.	3
GROWTH AND KEY ACTION 1	3
PREVIOUS MEASURES	3
4TH CALL UNDER KA1 AND POSSIBLE LARGE RTD ACTIONS	4
HOW TO PRESENT A "LARGE RTD ACTION"	4
“LARGE SCALE PROJECTS”	4
“CLUSTER OF PROJECTS”	5
OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	6
RELEVANT WEB-ADDRESSES:	6

Major revisions – history:

Date / rev.	Chapter / revision
17.01.2001 / rev. 0	Public release

Guidance note on “Large RTD Actions”

GROWTH - Research Action for Industrial Production

- Towards Larger European RTD actions of higher critical mass -

Introduction

European society is looking for effective and visible results of its investment into research made through the European Research Programmes.

The fact that the budgets available so far for these programmes, and for European research in general, are scarce underlines once more the importance of utilizing such resources as efficiently as possible.

One way of achieving an increased return on the investment and awareness goes through big scale actions, addressing important European problems, with a significant European impact.

A pilot phase is being launched within the GROWTH Directorate “Research Action for Industrial Production”, **KA1** and wherever appropriate **MAT**, to stimulate larger projects, in the frame of the last periodic call of FP5, closing on May 15, 2001.

GROWTH and Key Action 1

Key Action 1 is established around 5 Targeted Research Activities (TRAs), which research proposals must address. These TRAs provide the frame for obtaining the concentration of effort called for by the 5th Framework Programme.

Visions for future European research, including ideas for a European Research Area, call for the strengthening of such efforts towards concentration.

Previous Measures

Some measures have already been put in place to support this necessary evolution:

- **Larger individual projects**¹ with a higher critical mass and problem solving capability have been encouraged in past calls of GROWTH, encompassing RTD, benchmarking and validation.
- **Clusters of individual projects** have been established, under common partnership agreements, either at the proposal stage, or with the assistance of the Commission following the selection of proposals with common objectives.
- **Thematic Networks** have been established within each TRA to better co-ordinate the existing research groupings around strategic objectives.

This evolution towards a better structuring of research activities is expected to accelerate.

Today, through pilot Large Scale Actions, proposers are encouraged within the last periodic call for KA1, and wherever appropriate within MAT, to coordinate and focus their activities even more towards ensuring higher added value and the achievement of common objectives on a European scale.

¹ Today the average EC funding for selected projects is around 2 M€. “Large scale projects” are defined in the “Evaluation Manual” as projects with total cost exceed 10 M€.

Fourth Call 2001 under KA1 and possible Large RTD Actions.

With a total cost above 10 M€, Large RTD Actions can take the form of:

- **Large individual projects** or
- **Clusters of individual projects**

Other than their financial size (which alone will not automatically justify any project) it is recommended that large RTD actions:

Large RTD actions, including “large scale projects” and “clusters of projects”, are encouraged for the next and last 4th call, closing 15 May 2001, in support of an effective European Research Area.

- address problems of particular societal importance.
- ensure a significant impact at European level. This should be obvious in establishing a critical mass in terms of human, material and other resources in the proposal.
- go as far as possible towards changing current practices and developing new technologies throughout Europe.
- include RTD, demonstration, benchmarking, norms & standards, transfer, training, networking etc. to operate at both National and European level.
- possibly combine several sources of funding for its different modules according to each of the objectives.
- have a general and significant workpackage for management and a number of separate modules (individual projects or workpackages) for executing the technical scope.

Existing research groupings, including EC funded Thematic Networks, Nationally based industrial and research organisations, and other networks, should play an important role in identifying the research objectives and topics, establishing the relevant project teams for the larger, coordinated actions that are now called for.

How to present a "Large RTD action"

A large RTD action should be collective in its approach to solving the problem addressed. Care should be taken to explain a comprehensive approach, also reflected in the composition of the consortium (countries and stakeholders²) and the technical approach.

A proposal should be written according to the guidance provided in the Proposal Submission Forms, Parts B & C of the GROWTH Information Package, adapted depending on the type and size to give a clear picture of the proposed work and its justifications. This involves some additional details as explained below for **(1) “large scale projects”** and **(2) “clusters of projects”**.

“Large Scale Projects”

The proposal may consist of several workpackages, including the important management workpackage and a number of technical workpackages presenting the technical workscope.

A “Large scale project” is one proposal, for one project, and operating under one single contract.

² Partnerships should involve all stakeholders relevant to the RTD and the ultimate implementation and demonstration of the societal impact. This include research centres and universities, product or technology developers, component and material providers, industrial users, service companies, consultants in social issues, marketing specialists, policy makers, regulatory authorities, consumer organisations etc. SME participation in partnerships is particularly encouraged.

The **management workpackage** should ensure the proper follow-up of the project, ensure an effective information flow within the partnership, and the coordination across the **technical workpackages**. It should further ensure a permanent respect of the general and specific objectives and justifications for the proposed work. This will include a periodic and systematic justification of the **community added value**, the **societal needs and benefits**, the **economic development and S&T prospects**, the **exploitation and dissemination** aspects and **the consortium** and **project management**.

Each of the **workpackages** should be described and justified carefully, as required for chapters B4 and B5 of a proposal (ref. Proposal Submission Forms). Chapter B4 should be repeated for each technical workpackage proposed.

A large scale project may also, in addition to the work proposed to be funded under an EC contract, refer to other **non-EU funded technical modules**, established or to be established under private or National schemes. The expected interactions and benefits from these should be explained under the management workpackage of the proposal.

“Cluster of Projects”

A “cluster of projects” may be built around existing, already running projects and new research projects to be proposed. Each project should be able to run on its own, but with common and joint activities targeted towards the achievements of the cluster’s objectives.

A “cluster of projects” may consist of a group of individual existing and new projects, funded privately, Nationally and/or by EC Programmes.

A **common part** should be prepared, presenting information common to all projects in the cluster, including the general and specific objectives and justifications for the proposed work. This will include a systematic justification of the **community added value**, the **societal needs and benefits**, the **economic development and S&T prospects**, the **exploitation and dissemination** aspects and **the consortium** and **project management** (cf. the Proposal Submission Forms, Part B&C). A periodic and systematic update and justification of these aspects throughout the proposed project should be included under the **management workpackage**.

A common **management workpackage**, similar for all projects in the cluster, should be prepared, ensuring a high quality management, follow-up and the coordination across the **technical workpackages** and across all the projects in the cluster.

Additional **Joint workpackage(s)** may be established for managing the activities common for all the clustered projects, such as benchmarking, technology transfer, exploitation, dissemination and training activities.

Complementary clauses should be developed between the different projects in order to agree on the shared, common parts, linking the projects together and ensuring a higher degree of synergy. Alternatively a **network** could be proposed, requiring a separate proposal to be prepared.

For detailed requirements please also refer to the Proposal Submission Forms, Parts B & C and Annex II.

Other Recommendations

The major lines and objectives must be clear at the start. Details of each module to be funded by the EC in the initial phase must fulfill the normal requirements of the EC funding mechanisms, concerning specification and planning detail. However, a large RTD action can be launched with some modules still not fully specified, including some which may be planned to be performed on the basis of National funding, conditional upon the success of the RTD, e.g. National take-up or training activities. Different starting dates for these modules could hereby also apply.

The evaluation of large RTD actions will be performed according the existing guidelines for RTD&D proposals. The "Evaluation Manual" however requires that "Large scale projects" of more than 10 M€ must demonstrate an outstanding quality in partnership and management and, for this reason, an increased threshold mark of 4.0 is applied for the criterion relating to 'Partnership and Management'.

Presenting a well thought out large RTD action, despite the extra efforts required, should give proposers additional advantages deriving from a comprehensive and strategic approach.

Contact with the European Commission is suggested when starting to prepare a large scale proposal, by means of the Pre-Proposal Check service.

RELEVANT WEB-ADDRESSES:

CORDIS Homepage:	http://www.cordis.lu/
GROWTH Homepage:	http://www.cordis.lu/growth/
GROWTH Documents	http://www.cordis.lu/growth/src/library.htm
CALL Information:	http://www.cordis.lu/growth/src/callmain.htm
Latest Call of 14 DEC 2000:	http://www.cordis.lu/growth/calls/200004.htm
Partner Search Facility on CORDIS:	http://www.cordis.lu/fp5/src/eoi.htm

Note: For Proposal Submission Forms, Evaluation Manual and other information – see GROWTH documents – or latest call information.