

Results of the invitation to submit expressions of interest in the field *Science and Society*

1. Introduction

Science and society is a new theme in Community Research. The aim is to help create an environment where the public at large - and young people in particular - are more aware, knowledgeable and excited by science; where scientific endeavour is naturally responsive to public concerns and aspirations, including gender issues; and where both policy makers and citizens can make informed choices from the range of options thrown up by technological progress.

The 'constituency' of interested parties is under-developed, and - at least in some areas - the Commission felt it necessary to better understand the ideas and preoccupations of potential proposers before setting out in detail the content of future calls for proposals.

With this in mind, an invitation to submit expressions of interest (Eoi) appeared in the Official Journal of 1 April 2003, with a deadline of 2 June 2003. This provided an opportunity in the first year of the programme for researchers and other interested parties to come forward with ideas that could be included in future editions of the work programme, and in particular the revision of the work programme for 2004.

A secondary benefit would be gained by publishing the submitted entries, allowing interested parties to make contacts and forge new trans-European collaborations on topics of mutual interest.

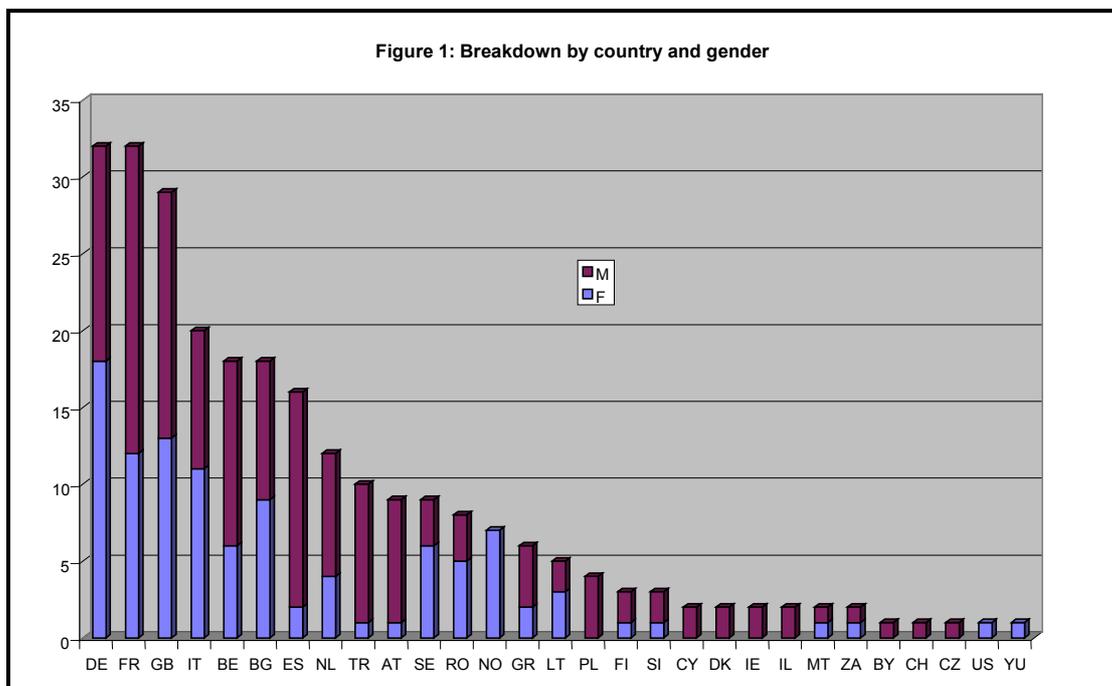
The text of the invitation published in the OJ is given in annex.

2. Basic statistics

After a slow start, a total of 283 submissions were received by the deadline. Interestingly, almost half arrived in the last ten days. A large number of these were duplicates, or near duplicates, giving a final total of 227 distinct submissions.

Geography and gender (figure 1)

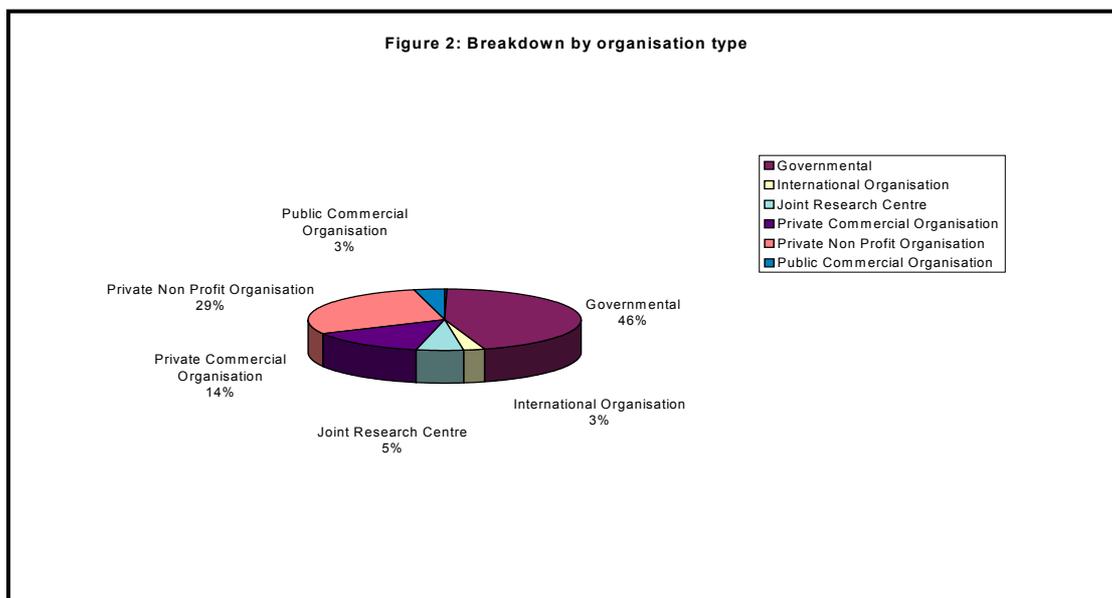
Submissions came from 29 different countries, including 13 Member States, 9 accession countries and the USA. The four biggest Member States (by population) were the most represented. Belgian submissions were fifth in line, reflecting the plethora of Brussels-based bodies following EU affairs. Bulgarian bodies were particularly active in this exercise, presenting more entries than the next largest Member State, Spain.



The impact of the invitation outside Europe was limited, since only two submissions from beyond the continent (from the US and South Africa) were received.

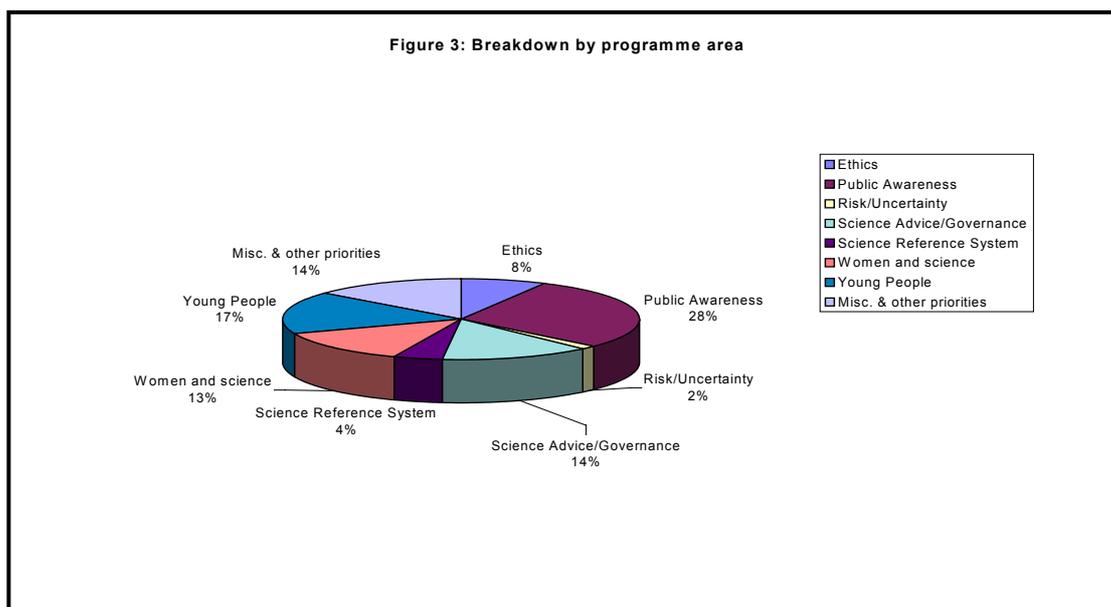
Overall, just over 40% of submissions were from women, although figure 1 shows that their representation was uneven across the responses from the various countries.

Organisation type (figure 2)



Nearly half the submitters classified themselves as belonging to the governmental sector. The vast majority of these were from universities and other public research organisations. Only 14% of responses came from the private commercial sector.

Programme area (figure 3)



The received submissions were categorised¹ into broad classes corresponding to areas of the *Science and society* work programme. A number were considered to be out of scope of the specific programme, even though they may contain some elements of interest to the programme objectives. A further group of submissions, whilst possibly addressing some societal issues, were considered to be more relevant to other priority areas of FP6. These two groups have been categorised under ‘Miscellaneous and other priorities’.

All parts of the programme received a reasonable number of responses, with the exception of ‘risk and uncertainty’, which only attracted 4 submissions. The area ‘public awareness’ caused the greatest interest possibly because this theme is ‘mature’ and more likely to engage a wide range of interested parties.

3. Qualitative Assessment

The content of all submissions was assessed by Commission staff.

The overall response to the invitation was impressive, both in terms of numbers of submissions and in terms of the breadth of topics covered. All parts of the *science and society* domain were addressed.

Two types of submission could be observed:

- Submissions dealing with one or more *science and society* issues (governance, ethics, outreach, gender) in a general manner, for example to establish widely applicable guidelines or best practices.

¹ Many EoIs addressed more than one area – these were categorised according to the ‘centre of gravity’ of the suggested activity. In many cases, EoIs were attributed to categories other than those suggested by the submitters.

- Submissions dealing with *science and society* aspects in one particular sector (eg. raising public awareness of societal aspect of modern biotechnology).

Each submission was judged as to whether the topic addressed would already be covered by the current *science and society* work programme, or whether, in contrast, the topic could be considered as a new component for possible inclusion.

Furthermore, clusters of related Eols were identified within each *Science and society* programme area.

A brief summary of the responses by *Science and society* sector is given below:

Scientific advice, governance and reference systems

A total of 50 submissions fell in this category. Three clusters could be identified:

- Scientific advice;
- Risk;
- Participation of civil society in research policies.

As a general remark (applicable, in fact, to all areas addressed in this exercise), although many interesting ideas were submitted, only a relatively small number could potentially have a structuring effect on the European Research Area (ERA). Many presented examples or case studies related to specific sectors (e.g. health, forest management). A further class of Eol suggested supporting activities, such as studies, aiming to reinforce the knowledge base on, for example, participatory processes.

Ethics

20 Eols were submitted under this heading. Five clusters were identified:

- IT and (meta)ethics: a rather theoretical study in the cognitive sciences and philosophy
- Deontology: most of these topics would appear to be covered by the current WP.
- Working practices and decision making in ethics committees
- Education: an EU-wide approach based on common values and problem-solving methods
- Life science and ethics: an assortment of different actions (publications, conferences, and studies) specific to this sector.

None were felt to have offered new ideas for the work programme. Most proposed applications of topics already covered. Others represented case studies applicable to specific sectors, and would potentially duplicate activities underway in the thematic priorities.

Public awareness and Young people

110 submissions fell into this category.

- Media: both specific topics and tools for dissemination. The media tools include web pages, information material, journals, databases and unspecified “information systems”. Some Eols addressed very specific topics (eg. brain research, mathematics), whilst others focused on information and communication tools (eg. Scientific daily newspaper for schools, media fellowships) without necessarily specifying particular subjects. In a number of cases the related communication technology could have been explained in more detail.
- Young people: mostly targeting science education. Most proposals would be covered by the current call on a European Science Education Initiative.
- European study courses: linked to action 13 of the Action Plan, particularly related to the history of science.
- Science shops. The sort of deliveries expected from the suggested activities include on-line information, training information, guidelines, networks, country reports, impact studies etc.)
- European Science Week: Only a small number of submissions fell into this cluster, dealing, for example, with enhancing the European dimension of national events, supporting national activities, and sector-specific initiatives.
- Dissemination to the public of Community research results, for example guidelines for communicating results to the public.
- One Eol suggested an Award for European Scientific and technological culture.

Women and Science

30 submissions fell into this category.

- Analysis of policies and actions: including development of good practices.
- Measuring/evaluating scientific excellence: extent and effect of gender bias in allocating research grants, peer evaluation, scientific productivity etc.
- Benchmarking/statistics/indicators: including an assessment of current methods of data collection and recommendations using the Labour Force Survey and other national/international data sources.
- History/sociology/philosophy of science: with a view to a better understanding of the gender issue in science.
- Career/life issues for women scientists: reconciliation of professional and family life.
- Practical tools for gender equality: including gender impact assessment tools and a model of “gender equality action plan” for FP6 projects.
- Mainstreaming *science and society*: these submissions combine gender aspects with other *science and society* issues, such as young people and science education, science shops, ethical reviews of clinical research.

- Specific proposals: with a focus on regional differences in the participation of women in science and in policy development to tackle the gender gap.

4. Final remarks

This exercise differed from the programme-wide invitation carried out in 2002, in that submitters were not required to outline potential proposals for projects, nor were they required to provide information on possible consortia. Therefore, there was not necessarily a correspondence between an Eol and a potential project.

This Eol exercise was rather regarded as a 'call for ideas'. It was hoped that the ideas would help in the description of new topics to be included for the first time in the revised work programme, as well, perhaps, as helping to 'flesh out' and focus existing topics.

The analysis carried out by Commission staff has led to certain broad conclusions:

- The objectives and actions covered by the *science and society* work programme have, in general, been understood by the submitters
- Most submissions suggested ideas that were already covered by the existing work programme. This tends to confirm that the general thrust of the programme responds to the preoccupations of the community of interested parties
- Only a rather small number of submissions suggested unexpected new topics that could feed directly into the revision of the work programme. Nonetheless, a reassuring number address topics already under consideration.
- A large number of submissions addressed very specific actions that would probably be better suited to one or more of the thematic priorities of FP6.

At the time of writing the results of this exercise are being assessed by the members of the *Science and Society* Expert Advisory Group. The Commission will assimilate their advice, together with other inputs, when finalising the revised work programme.

Meanwhile, all the non-confidential Eols will be published on CORDIS, together with an on-line search tool. It is hoped that this alone will help to develop the *Science and Society* community at the European level, and may trigger new collaborative partnerships

Brussels
August 2003

Annex 1

Announcement of Eol in the Official Journal

Invitation to submit expressions of interest in the field 'Science and Society'

An opportunity to help implement the Specific Programme 'Structuring the European Research Area', part of the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and technological development

The European Commission invites the submission of 'expressions of interest' (Eol) from those interested in participating in activities related to the theme 'Science and Society' as part of the specific programme 'Structuring the European Research Area'².

The aim is to help the Commission identify topics that could be the subject of calls for proposals in 2004 and beyond. The Eol provides an opportunity to identify activities that correspond to the concerns of interested bodies across Europe. The Commission will take careful account of the results of this invitation, although it is not committed to include suggested topics in future versions of the work programme.

Please note that the submission of an Eol gives no preference in subsequent calls for proposals. All proposals in response to future calls will be considered according to published eligibility rules (including minimum requirements on consortium composition) and evaluation criteria. No account will be taken of whether or not they had been the subject of an Eol.

The Commission may publish submitted Eol, except for any confidential parts, to help interested parties exchange ideas and establish collaborations.

Please note that a number of calls for proposals under 'Science and Society' are already published or planned for 2003 (See <http://www.cordis.lu/calls/science-society/>). The current invitation for Eol will have no impact on these 2003 calls.

Eol may be submitted from any individual, organisation or group of organisations.

The Commission may call upon outside experts to help in the review of submissions.

² Council decision of 30 September 2002 adopting a specific programme for research, technological development and demonstration: "Structuring the European Research Area" (2002-2006)
2002/835/EC

A guide for submitters, help desk address and further information relevant to this invitation can be found at the following web address <http://www.cordis.lu/eoi/science-society/>

Eoi must be prepared as indicated in the guide for submitters and must be sent using the on-line submission form only, to arrive no later than 17:00 (Brussels local time) on 2 June 2003.