Seventh framework programme of the European Community for research and technological development including demonstration activities (FP7)

The 'Seventh framework programme' will be carried out to pursue the general objectives described in Article 163 of the Treaty, to strengthen industrial competitiveness and to meet the research needs of other Community policies, thereby contributing to the creation of a knowledge-based society, building on a 'European research area' and complementing activities at a national and regional level. It will promote excellence in scientific and technological research, development and demonstration through the four programmes: Cooperation, Ideas, People and Capacities. The FP7 will also support the non-nuclear direct scientific and technical actions carried out by the 'Joint Research Centre' (JRC).

The 'Seventh framework programme' complements the activities carried out in the Member States as well as other Community actions that are necessary for the overall strategic effort to achieve the Lisbon goals, along-side, in particular, those under the structural funds and those relating to agriculture, fisheries, education, training, competitiveness and innovation, industry, employment and environment.

Mutual synergies and complementarity should be assured with Community policies and programmes, while also addressing the need for a strengthened and simplified approach to research funding, which is particularly important for SMEs. The FP7 should aim, in particular, to secure the appropriate involvement of SMEs through concrete measures and specific actions for their benefit. Innovation and SME-related activities supported under this framework programme should be complementary to those undertaken under the 'Competitiveness and innovation framework programme'. 
Participation in the activities of the FP7 should be facilitated through the publication of all relevant information, to be made available in a timely and user-friendly manner to all potential participants and the appropriate use of simple and quick procedures, free of unduly complex financial conditions and unnecessary reporting, in accordance with the 'Rules for participation' applicable to this framework programme, laying down the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities in actions under the FP7 and for the dissemination of research results.

Research activities supported by the 'Seventh framework programme' should respect fundamental ethical principles, including those reflected in the 'Charter of fundamental rights' of the European Union. The opinions of the 'European group on ethics in science and new technologies' are and will be taken into account. Research activities should also take into account the 'Protocol on the protection and welfare of animals' and reduce the use of animals in research and testing, with a view ultimately to replacing animal use.

All the research activities carried out under the FP7 shall be carried out in compliance with fundamental ethical principles. The following fields of research shall not be financed under this framework programme:

- research activity aiming to clone humans for reproductive purposes;
- research activity intended to modify the genetic heritage of human beings which could make such changes heritable;
- research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purpose of research or for the purpose of stem cell procurement, including those created by means of somatic cell nuclear transfer.

Research on human stem cells, both adult and embryonic, may be financed, depending both on the contents of the scientific proposal and the legal framework of the Member State(s) involved. Any application for financing for research on human embryonic stem cells shall include, as appropriate, details of licensing and control measures that will be taken by the competent authorities of the Member States as well as details of the ethical approval(s) that will be provided. As regards the derivation of human embryonic stem cells, institutions, organisations and researchers shall be subject to strict licensing and control in accordance with the legal framework of the Member State(s) involved.

The Commission shall continually and systematically monitor the implementation of the 'Seventh framework programme' and its specific programmes and regularly report and disseminate the results of this monitoring. No later than 2010, the Commission shall carry out, with the assistance of external experts, an evidence-based interim evaluation of this framework programme and its specific programmes, building upon the ex-post evaluation of the 'Sixth framework programme'. This
evaluation will cover the quality of the research activities under way, as well as the quality of implementation and management, and progress towards the objectives set.

The Commission will communicate the conclusions thereof, accompanied by its observations and, where appropriate, proposals for the adaptation of this framework programme, to the European Parliament, the Council, the 'European economic and social committee' and the 'Committee of the regions'.

The interim evaluation will be preceded by a progress report as soon as enough data becomes available, giving initial findings on the effectiveness of the new actions initiated under the 'Seventh framework programme' and of the efforts made with regard to simplification.

Two years following the completion of this framework programme, the Commission will carry out an external evaluation by independent experts of its rationale, implementation and achievements. The Commission will communicate the conclusions thereof, accompanied by its observations, to the European Parliament, the Council, the 'European economic and social committee' and the 'Committee of the regions'.

Please visit the CORDIS site to check the latest calls for proposals under the 'http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm (Seventh framework programme)'


Building upon the achievements of the 'Sixth framework programme' towards the creation of the 'European research area' and carrying them further towards the development of a knowledge-based economy and society in Europe, which will meet the goals of the Lisbon strategy in Community policies, the objectives of the 'Seventh framework programme' are the following:

- support transnational cooperation on every scale across the EU;
- enhance investigator-driven basic research based on excellence;
- strengthen human potential in research and technology in Europe, both quantitatively and qualitatively;
- develop and enhance the excellence of European research institutions and
universities.
The following information was based on the official information available at the time of writing. Priorities and activities may change. For the very latest information please consult the work programmes available with the appropriate call at:

In order to realise these objectives FP7 will promote four programmes, namely 'Cooperation', 'Ideas', 'People' and 'Capacities'.

1. The 'Cooperation' programme: support should be provided for transnational cooperation at an appropriate scale across the Union and beyond, in a number of thematic areas corresponding to major fields of the progress of knowledge and technology, where research should be supported and strengthened to address European social, economic, environmental, public health and industrial challenges, serve the public and support developing countries. Where possible, this programme will allow flexibility for mission-orientated schemes which cut across the thematic priorities:
   a) Health
   b) Food, agriculture and fisheries, and biotechnology
   c) Information and communication technologies
   d) Nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies
   e) Energy
   f) Environment (including climate change)
   g) Transport (including aeronautics)
   h) Socio-economic sciences and humanities
   i) Space
   j) Security

2. The 'Ideas' programme: activities should be implemented by a 'European Research Council' (ERC), which should enjoy a high degree of autonomy in order to develop very high-level frontier research at European level, building on excellence in Europe and raising its profile at international level. The ERC should maintain regular contact with the scientific community and European institutions. As regards the ERC structures, the mid-term review of the 'Seventh framework programme' may show the need for further improvements necessitating appropriate amendments.

3. The 'People' programme: individuals should be stimulated to enter the research profession, European researchers should be encouraged to stay in Europe, researchers from the entire world should be attracted to Europe, and Europe should be made more attractive to the best researchers. Building on the positive experiences with the 'Marie Curie actions' under previous framework programmes, the 'People' programme should:
- encourage individuals to enter the profession of research;
- structure the research training offers and options;
- encourage European researchers to stay in, or return to Europe;
- encourage intersectoral mobility;
- attract researchers from all over the world to Europe.

The mobility of researchers is the key, not only to the career development of researchers, but also to the sharing and transfer of knowledge between countries and sectors and to ensuring that innovative frontier research in various disciplines benefits from dedicated and competent researchers, as well as increased financial resources.

4. The 'Capacities' programme:

- the use and development of research infrastructures should be optimised;
- innovative capacities of SMEs and their ability to benefit from research should be strengthened;
- the development of regional research-driven clusters should be supported;
- the research potential in the Union's convergence and outermost regions should be unlocked;
- science and society should be brought closer together in European society;
- support should be given to the coherent development of research policies at national and Community level;
- horizontal actions and measures in support of international cooperation should be undertaken.

The 'Joint Research Centre' (JRC) should contribute to providing customer-driven scientific and technological support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of Community policies. In this regard, it is useful that the JRC continues to function as an independent reference centre for science and technology in the Union in the areas of its specific competence.

A) Indirect actions: The supported activities will be funded through a range of 'Funding schemes', which will be used, either alone or in combination, to fund actions implemented throughout the FP7. The decisions for specific programmes, work programmes and calls for proposals will specify, as and when appropriate:

- the type(s) of scheme(s) used to fund different actions;
- the categories of participants which can benefit from them;
- the types of activities which can be funded through each of them.

Where different funding schemes can be used, the work programmes may specify the funding scheme to be used for the topic on which proposals are invited. The funding schemes are:
a) To support actions which are primarily implemented on the basis of calls for proposals:

1 Collaborative projects
Support for research projects carried out by consortia with participants from different countries, aiming to develop new knowledge, new technology, products, demonstration activities or common resources for research. The size, scope and internal organisation of projects can vary from field to field and from topic to topic. Projects can range from small or medium-scale focused research actions to large-scale integrating projects for achieving a defined objective. Projects will also be targeted towards special groups (SMEs).

2 Networks of excellence
Support for a 'Joint programme of activities' implemented by a number of research organisations integrating their activities in a given field, carried out by research teams in the framework of longer term cooperation.

3 Coordination and support actions
Support for activities aimed at coordinating or supporting research activities and policies. These actions may also be implemented by means other than calls for proposals.

4 Support for 'frontier' research
Support for projects carried out by individual national or transnational research teams. This scheme will be used to support investigator-driven 'frontier' research projects funded in the framework of the ERC.

5 Support for training and career development of researchers
Support for training and career development of researchers, mainly to be used for the implementation of the Marie Curie actions.

6 Research for the benefit of specific groups
Support for research projects where the bulk of the research and technological development is carried out by universities, research centres or other legal entities, for the benefit of specific groups, in particular SMEs or associations of SMEs. Efforts will be undertaken to mobilise additional financing from the 'European Investment Bank' (EIB) and other financial organisations.

b) To support actions implemented on the basis of decisions by the Council and the European Parliament based on a proposal from the Commission, the Community will provide financial support to multi-financed large-scale initiatives:

- A financial contribution to the joint implementation of well-identified national research programmes. This joint implementation will require the establishment or
existence of a dedicated implementation structure. Community financial support will be provided subject to the definition of a financing plan based on formal commitments from competent national authorities.

- A financial contribution to the implementation of 'Joint technology initiatives' to realise objectives that cannot be achieved through the above-mentioned funding schemes. 'Joint technology initiatives' will mobilise a combination of funding of different kinds and from different sources; private and public, European and national. This funding may take different forms and may be allocated or mobilised though a range of mechanisms: support from the framework programme, loans from the EIB and risk capital support. Community support will be provided subject to the definition of an overall blueprint of financial engineering, based on formal commitments from all parties concerned.

- A financial contribution to the development of new infrastructures of European interest. The development of new infrastructures will mobilise a combination of funding of a different nature and origin: national funding, framework programme, structural funds, loans from the EIB and others. Community support will be provided subject to the definition of an overall financial plan based on a commitment from all parties concerned.

The Community will implement the funding schemes in compliance with the provisions of the relevant regulation and State aid instruments, as well as international rules in this area. In compliance with this international framework, it will be necessary to be able to adjust the scale and form of financial participation on a case-by-case basis, in particular if funding from other public sector sources is available, including other sources of Community financing such as the EIB.

In addition, the Community will improve their access to debt finance through the ‘Risk-sharing finance facility’ by providing a contribution to the EIB. The Community contribution must be used by the EIB, which will be a risk-sharing partner, to contribute to the provision and capital allocation for loan and guarantee financing from its own resources. Subject to, and in accordance with arrangements to be established, this mechanism will enable the EIB to increase the amount of financing of European RTD actions to help overcome market deficiencies.

In the case of participants in an indirect action established in a region lagging in terms of development (convergence and outermost regions), complementary funding from the structural funds will be mobilised wherever possible and appropriate. In the case of participation of entities from the candidate countries, an additional contribution from the pre-accession financial instruments may be granted under similar conditions. As regards actions in the 'Research infrastructures', the detailed funding arrangements for these will be defined with a view to ensuring that there is effective complementarity between community research funding and other
Community and national instruments, notably the structural funds.

B) Direct actions: The Community will undertake activities implemented by the JRC, which are referred to as direct actions.

**Context**

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1 January 2007

to:
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FP6

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H2020

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