

ERA-NET

DRAFT Frequently Asked Questions

This list of FAQs will be subject to revisions and completions, notably after revisions of the work programme.

This document is not a legal document, but its role is to explain certain points and therefore the language is much simplified. In case of conflicts between the text in this list of FAQs and the work programme, the participation rules or any other legal documents, the text of the legal document prevails.
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Frequently asked questions regarding ERA-NET¹
(updated on 13 April 2003)

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¹ The Frequently Asked Questions are not a legal document. Although the Commission services have taken care to avoid errors, in case of conflict between these and the legal documents such as the European Parliament and Council Decisions, the work programme and the evaluation manual, the texts of the legal documents prevail.

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0 Sources of Information

0.1 Where can I find information on the ERA-NET scheme? [Back](#)

The Commission services publish all relevant information on the ERA-NET scheme and other RTD activities on the internet via CORDIS (<http://www.CORDIS.lu>).

The ERA-NET home page is <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/home.html>.

More information and more internet addresses can be found in the guide for proposers which is available on CORDIS.

0.2 Where can I get assistance? [Back](#)

Proposers can find assistance in the EU Member States and in the Associated Countries through the National Contact Points (NCPs) for co-ordination. Their contact details, including their e-mail addresses, can be found at: <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/ncp.htm>.

The Commission has established a helpdesk for ERA-NET which can be reached by email at rtd-coordination@cec.eu.int. It should be noted that the helpdesk offers a pre-proposal check service.

0.3 Which documents can I consult? [Back](#)

There is an information package which the Commission has prepared and which is available via internet at <http://fp6.cordis.lu/coordination/calls.cfm> and at <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/home.html>. This includes i.a. the ERA-NET Guides for proposers (one for Co-ordination Actions and one for Specific Support Actions), the ERA-NET work programme (normally updated once per year) and the call for proposals. In addition, "Some suggestions for the preparation of an ERA-NET Co-ordination Action" is also available at <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/era-net.htm>.

The Guidelines on proposal evaluation and selection procedures, the Model Contract and the Checklist for a consortium agreement can be found at <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm - evalproc>.

A list of all selected ERA-NET projects (CA and SSA) together with the coordinators contact details are now also available on <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/home.html>
General FAQs can be found at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/faq/index.cfm>

I General aspects

1.1 What is the ERA-NET scheme? [Back](#)

The ERA-NET scheme is aimed at stepping up the co-ordination and networking of national and/or regional research and innovation programmes or parts thereof (and not of “research projects”). This will be done mainly by the networking of research activities conducted at national or regional level. In this context, the mutual opening of national and regional research programmes will be considered as well.

The participants are therefore programme managers and programme makers.

ERA-NETs will contribute to the construction of the European Research Area via their lasting structuring and strengthening effects.

1.2 What is the added value for the participants of an ERA-NET? [Back](#)

In addition to contributing to the development of the European Research Area (ERA), ERA-NETs have a number of benefits for the national and regional research programmes (and their programme managers) involved in an ERA-NET, e.g.

- 1) Increasing and tightening co-operation with European colleagues, notably through exchange of best practices, better knowledge of work of other programme managers and – as a consequence - greater complementarity as well as exchange of programme management approaches
- 2) Establishment of common platforms dealing with horizontal issues
- 3) Exchange of legal and administrative aspects regarding the implementation of RTD programmes,
- 4) Increase of reflections on intensified transnational co-operation
- 5) Improvement of the cost/benefit ratio through increased co-operation

1.3 What does “national or regional research activities/programmes” mean? [Back](#)

“Research activities” carried out at national or regional level should be understood either as full research and innovation programmes, or parts of such programmes or similar initiatives². The ERA-NET work programme requires that these research programmes have the following characteristics:

² In this context, “research activities” are not “research projects” developed by scientists, but research programmes defined by the programme managers

- a) they must be strategically planned and executed at the national or regional level;
- b) they must be financed or managed by national or regional public bodies or structures closely related to, or mandated by, public authorities.

1.4 What does “regional programmes” mean in this context? [Back](#)

“Regional programmes” should be understood as programmes executed at a regional level i.e. at the level of "sub-national administrative structures " (e.g. “Länder”, provinces or regions).

1.5 To what extent can “parts” of national or regional research programmes be included in ERA-NETs? [Back](#)

Each country, province and region defines its research programmes in a different way. It is therefore often more appropriate to include only relevant, corresponding parts of programmes in ERA-NETs and not whole national programmes which have different coverage.

1.6 What does "strategically planned" mean?

"Strategically planned" research activities means that they are either complete or parts of programmes, each having been defined for a period of time, with clear objectives and with a related budget.

If a country implements and funds its research activities via a central fund in the area concerned, it may also participate. This implies that there must be a clear strong commitment which establishes the funding body’s role as a key actor in the field of interest (inside the country or region).

1.7 What are the fields covered? [Back](#)

ERA-NET activities may be carried out in any field of science and technology, including the social and human sciences and research related activities (training, women and science, science and society, etc...). No preference will be given to any research topic over another one. An ERA-NET can also cover several fields.

1.8 Will it be possible to change the technical content of an ERA-NET or to change partners? [Back](#)

There are 2 cases to be distinguished: a) adjustments of technical content without additional funding and b) evolutions of the ERA-NET together with additional EU funding.

a) Adjustments of the technical content without additional EU funding

With the agreement of the Commission, the technical content of an ERA-NET may be adjusted at any time, notably following the mid-term review.

The consortium may itself decide to take in new members without additional financing. The contract will specify the procedures to be followed. All modifications will require the agreement of the Commission and an amendment of the contract (normally through a simplified procedure implying a tacit agreement of the Commission within 6 weeks of the notification).

b) Evolutions of the ERA-NET together with additional EU funding

Proposals requesting additional funding to extend the activities and/or the participants in existing ERA-NETs may be submitted at any of the closure dates and at the final deadline in 2005.

These complementary proposals should include:

- a description of the new activities and their relevance to the objectives of the ERA-NET and/or the description of the new partners and their role within the ERA-NET;
- a description of the added value arising from the enlargement of the ERA-NET,

Obviously, in order to allow for proper evaluations, sufficient information on the existing ERA-NET must be included as well.

Detailed guidelines for supplementary proposals are available on CORDIS and from the ERA-NET helpdesk.

1.9 What are the links with other activities developed within the FP6? [Back](#)

The ERA-NET scheme is a unique scheme which deals with the co-ordination of research programmes. It allows for all RTD or innovation topics to be addressed. If there happens to be a link to another activity of the Framework Programme (e.g. to one of the Thematic Priorities) the Commission services will ensure appropriate co-ordination.

1.10 Which instruments will be used to implement the ERA-NET scheme? [Back](#)

The ERA-NET scheme will be implemented via Co-ordination actions (CAs) and Specific Support Actions (SSAs).

Co-ordination actions (CAs) are intended to be used to implement ERA-NET networking and co-ordination activities and can continue for up to 5 years. The

financial support from the Community will be limited to the costs of the co-ordination and management activities undertaken to implement the ERA-NET. No support will be provided for the research activities themselves (i.e. the research itself will be funded from national or regional sources).

Specific support actions (SSAs) will be used to support preparatory actions aimed at developing future ERA-NETs. Specific support actions should have a limited scope and be limited in time (typically 0.5 to 1 year). The financial support from the Community will be given to finance a part of the preparatory activities and their management.³

1.11 How can I get information about existing national and regional research programmes?

[Back](#)

Most of the ministries, funding agencies and other public bodies that manage public research programmes have set up quite extensive web sites (many are accessible via http://www.cordis.lu/national_service/fr/home.html) Typically they contain descriptions of programmes, announcements of calls for proposals and short descriptions of funded projects.

The National Contact Points (NCPs) can also assist you to find a relevant programme manager (contact details can be found on <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/nep.htm>).

³ Please note that it is likely SSAs can only be submitted up to the October 2004 closure date.

II Participants

2.1 How many participants are required?

[Back](#)

a) Co-ordination Actions

For ERA-NET Co-ordination Actions, the legal minimum number of participants has been set at three independent legal entities established in 3 different Member States or Associated States, of which at least two shall be Member States or Associated Candidate Countries, and which fulfil the specific eligibility requirements for an ERA-NET (cf. 2.2).

It has, however, to be emphasised that preference will be given to ERA-NETs involving a more substantial number of Member States or Associated States than the minimum legally required number of three in order to obtain a significant structuring or strengthening effect at European level (The average number of participants in funded ERA-NETs is now about 13).

The participants may regroup themselves in appropriate legal structures such as a European Economic Interest Group (EEIG). If the members of such a grouping fulfil the minimum criteria for participation in an ERA-NET, the grouping can be the sole participant. It should be noted that the legal structure may not contain any members which are not eligible.

b) Specific Support Actions

For ERA-NET Specific Support Actions, the minimum number of participants is one which fulfils the specific eligibility requirements for an ERA-NET (see 2.2 for details). Although the average of contractors is 3, proposers of SSAs should indicate that there is already a core of relevant organisations intending to participate in the future CA.

2.2 Who can participate in an ERA-NET⁴?

[Back](#)

The participants in ERA-NETs are the program managers, or more precisely, their organizations, acting at the national or regional level.

!!

a) Co-ordination Actions (CAs)

For the legal minimum number of participants in ERA-NET Co-ordination Actions participants must be from one of the following three categories:

- ◆ Public bodies responsible for financing or managing research activities carried out at national or regional level e.g. ministries, state committees for research, academies, agencies, funding agencies or national research organizations;

⁴ For participants from Third Countries and International Organisations, see FAQs 2.6 and 2.8.

- ◆ Other national or regional bodies that finance or manage such research activities such as agencies established by governments under private law with a public service mission
- ◆ Bodies operating at European level that include the pan-European co-ordination of nationally-funded research activities⁵ as part of their mission.

The only other type of entity which may participate in addition to the aforementioned are legal entities such as charities or other private organisations which also manage research programmes that are strategically planned and executed at national or regional level..

It should be noted that over 2/3 of the participants in successful proposals are ministries and research councils (or similar organisations). This had to be expected in view of the objectives of the ERA-N ET scheme and the evaluation criteria.

In the case a participating organisation manages a programme on behalf of a ministry, it is normally necessary that both the ministry and the delegated programme manager participate. In fact, this tandem has provided very useful since the ministry is responsible for strategic and political issues while the other participant is the actual programme manager.

Proposers are invited to indicate in which category they fall and describe briefly the relevant research or innovation programmes they own or manage. (chapter B.4 of part B of the proposal or in an appendix). These should i.a. include a (very) short description of the relevant research and innovation programmes themselves as well as the amounts of the associated budgets and the number of projects funded (per year) and the ways projects are selected.

It should be noted that individual researchers and research institutes are not eligible. The only exception would be when a research institute has been entrusted by a public body with the task of managing a public research programme on its behalf i.e. this entity has taken over the whole management of the programme from the calls of proposals to the monitoring of selected projects - or at least a substantial part of this process. Such bodies would then become eligible for ERA-NETs related to this particular programme, but not for their other activities.

b) Specific Support Actions (SSAs)

In the case of Specific Support Actions, any entity from one of the above mentioned 3 categories may be the sole participant (but there can also be more than one participant).

NOTE: Please note that if one or several of the participants is not eligible, the whole proposal might become ineligible or fail evaluation.

⁵ “activities” understood as research and innovation programmes or parts thereof

2.3 What is meant by a “programme manager or programme maker”? [Back](#)

Programme managers/makers are the persons resp. the entities which manage/plan the strategically planned public research programmes, e.g. the programme managers/makers of the research ministries or the funding agencies.

2.4 What are the rules for the participation of legal entities from Associated Candidate Countries and Other Associated Countries? [Back](#)

a) Associated Candidate Countries

Associated Candidate Countries will be treated just like Member States (all 3 Candidate Countries are associated to FP-VI). As an example, the minimum requirement for the partnership in an ERA-NET consists of 3 participants all 3 of which can be from Associated Candidate Countries.

Associated Candidate Countries are the following: Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

b) Other Associated Countries

Countries that are not Associated Candidate Countries but which are associated to FP-VI (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Israel) will be able to participate in the Framework Programme and thus also in the ERA-NET scheme and will be able to benefit from financial support under the same conditions as Member States and Associated Candidate Countries. Nevertheless, the partnership shall always include at least 2 legal entities from Member States or Associated Candidate Countries further to the legal entities from other Associated Countries involved.

Third Countries and international organisations

2.5 Can Third countries participate? [Back](#)

Third countries (i.e. those which are neither EU Member States nor Associated Countries) can participate in the ERA-NET scheme, but there are some rules depending on the type of Third country. It should, however, be noted that the objective of the ERA-NET scheme is to contribute to the further development of the European Research Area (ERA) by co-ordinating national and regional research programmes of the EU Member States and Associated Countries. No special provisions have been made in the ERA-NET Work Programme for the inclusion of Third Countries so that the general rules for Third Countries apply.

Participants from third Countries are divided into two categories:

- Legal entities from Third countries having a co-operation agreement with the EU may participate over and above the minimum number of participants and may be funded if it is essential for carrying out the ERA-NET.
- Legal entities from other Third countries (i.e. those which do not have a co-operation agreement) may participate over and above the minimum number of

participants if it is essential for carrying out the ERA-NET and can be funded if it is essential for carrying out the ERA-NET.

2.6 What is the difference between an Association agreement and a Co-operation agreement? [Back](#)

Through an FP-VI Association agreement a country formally participates to the EU Research Framework Programme. It contributes also financially to a common fund and participants from that country may receive money from the common fund.

All 13 Candidate Countries and the 3 Countries which are part of the European Economic Area but not of the EU (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) are associated to FP-VI. At the time of writing decisions for Israel and Switzerland are still pending.

Other countries ("Third countries") may have an S & T co-operation agreement with the European Union, but they stay Third Countries. They do not contribute to the budget of FP-VI and legal entities of these Third Countries can only be funded under special conditions.

2.7 Can international organisations participate in ERA-NETs? [Back](#)

Yes, but there are some conditions depending on the type of international organisation. FP-VI distinguishes between two types of international organisations:

- a) International organisations of European interest: they are treated just like legal entities from Member States. The majority of their members are Member States and Associated States and their main goal is to promote European Scientific and technological co-operation. They can be counted for the minimum number of participants.
- b) International organisations others than those mentioned sub a): they are treated like participants from Third Countries (see FAQ 2.6).

For all of these, the special eligibility criteria of the ERA-NET scheme must naturally be fulfilled.

2.8 What is an EEIG? [Back](#)

The European Economic Interest Group (EEIG) is an association of legal entities. It is a flexible and light structure. Although it is a legal entity in its own right, each one of its members keeps its own identity. The frame for it was created by Council Regulation (CEE) n° 2137/85 from 25 July 1985 [OJ L199 of 31.7.1985, p. 1]. Similar structures exist in some Member States, but the advantage of the EEIG is that it is regulated at the level of the EEA (EU+ Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein) and hence there is only one set of rules for it throughout the EEA. At the time of writing, the regulation establishing the EEIG is not yet applicable in the Candidate Countries.

2.9 How can I find partners?

[Back](#)

One of the best ways to find not already known partners will probably be via National Contact Points (NCPs), preferably those responsible for co-ordination. Their addresses can be found on CORDIS at <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/ncp.htm>.

2.10 How can I join an SSA or a CA?

[Back](#)

a) SSAs: SSAs are normally looking for partners. These will be added formally at the end of the SSA i.e. when the actual ERA-NET proposal is submitted or when the ERA-NET is set up

b) CAs: Although it is possible to add partners at any time, the Commission services suggest that the original partners work for some time together (at least a year) before asking for permission to extend the ERA-NET (without additional funding) or before submitting a proposal for extension (with additional funding). Such a formal addition does not prevent the consortium to invite potential future partners to meetings or involve them informally. In such a case, these entities are expected to meet their own costs.

Please contact the helpdesk or your project officer if you intend to submit a supplementary proposal.

2.11 Can entities that do not (yet) have a programme participate? [Back](#)

The ERA-NET specific participation rules require that each participant owns or manages a programme (see 2.2 for additional participants). "Programme" is interpreted as a substantial and regular funding of activities in the field of interest allowing for both advance priority setting and selection of projects on an ad hoc (excellence) basis (see 1.6 above).

From these rules it is evident that entities which do not own or manage a programme in the field of interest (at the closure date of the call for proposals) cannot participate. They could, however, join at a later time once they have a programme. In the meantime, i.e. while the national programme is being prepared, the consortium has the possibility to invite representatives of these entities as "observers" to relevant meetings, exchange information with them and keep them informed about the progress of the ERA-NET, thus preparing for future integration. In such a case, these entities are expected to meet their own costs.

2.12 How can New Member States be further integrated into ERA-NETs?

[Back](#)

From the participation rules it is evident that participants must own or manage a programme in the field of interest (at the closure date of the call for proposals). In several cases this as well as other hurdles have prevented some potential participants

from Candidate Countries and New Member States to participate in ERA-NETs. Like others in similar situations, they can, however, join at a later time. In the meantime, the consortium has the possibility to invite representatives of these entities as “observers” to relevant meetings, exchange information with them and keep them informed about the progress of the ERA-NET, thus preparing for future integration.

DRAFT

III ERA-NET Activities

3.1 What type of activities can be undertaken in an ERA-NET Coordination Action? [Back](#)

The types of activities supported within an ERA-NET Co-ordination Action will be (i) "co-ordination and networking activities" and (ii) consortium management activities. Most ERA-NETs will probably foresee an evolving set of activities in which the co-ordination is gradually deepened.

Networking activities may involve many levels of co-operation and co-ordination activities depending on the degree of maturity of the network. An ERA-NET should be designed in such a way that the foreseen co-ordination is ambitious in the sense that it will not be limited to (i) i.e. it will reach at least (ii) below:

- (i) Systematic exchange of information and best practices
- (ii) Strategic activities
- (iii) Implementation of joint activities
- (iv) Transnational research activities

It should be noted more that 90% of the successful ERA-NETs proposals reach (iii) or (iv).

In addition to the actual co-ordination/networking activities, each ERA-NET will contain "consortium management". The consortium management and the actual ERA-NET activities must be separated in the proposal, in the budget and in the first annex of the contract. For ERA-NET CAs, consortium management activities typically include: 1) the management at consortium level of the ERA-NET activities and 2) the administrative management (e.g. the overall legal, contractual, ethical, financial and administrative management of the consortium, including all the communications with the Commission, preparing, updating and managing the consortium agreement between the participants and obtaining audit certificates from each of the participants)

3.2 Which type of activities can be undertaken under an ERA-NET Specific Support Action? [Back](#)

ERA-NET Specific Support Actions (SSAs) will be used mainly to support actions aimed at preparing for future ERA-NETs. In addition, specific support actions may be used to set up fora aimed at strengthening co-operation at a strategic level between managers of major national research programmes.

Specific Support Actions may also provide an excellent tool to encourage and facilitate the participation of organisations from the Candidate Countries in the ERA-NET scheme.

Specific Support Actions have a limited scope and may involve conferences, seminars, studies and analyses, working groups and expert groups, operational support

and dissemination, information and communication activities, or a combination of these, as appropriate in each case.

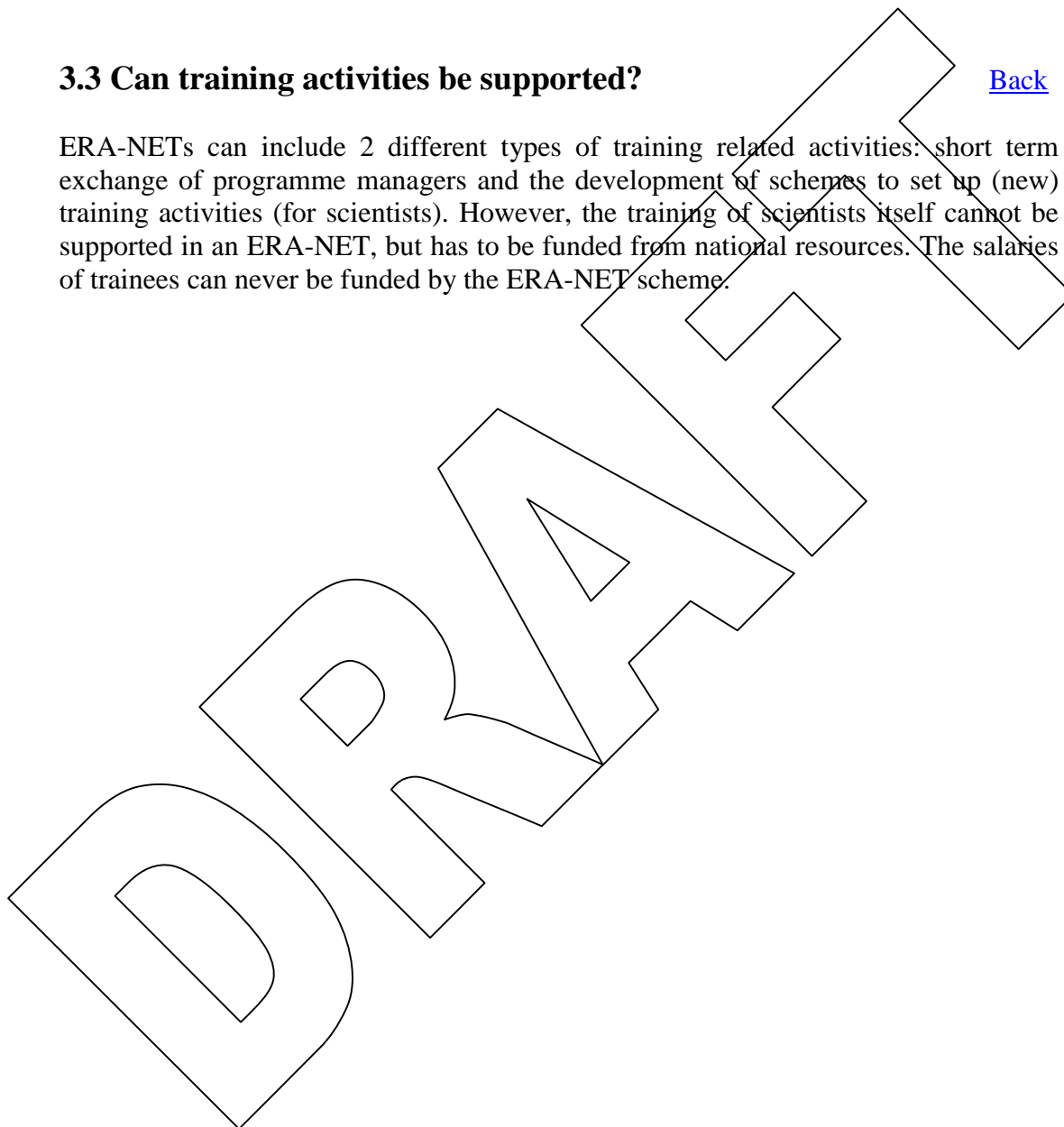
There will also be consortium management activities similar to those described above in FAQ 3.1.

Please note that it is likely that SSAs can only be submitted until the October 2004 closure date.

3.3 Can training activities be supported?

[Back](#)

ERA-NETs can include 2 different types of training related activities: short term exchange of programme managers and the development of schemes to set up (new) training activities (for scientists). However, the training of scientists itself cannot be supported in an ERA-NET, but has to be funded from national resources. The salaries of trainees can never be funded by the ERA-NET scheme.



IV ERA-NET proposals

4.1 Where can I find the information package and the application forms? [Back](#)

The ERA-NET information package, which includes the guide for proposers and the application forms can be found at <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/calls.cfm> and at <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/era-net.htm>.

4.2 What should proposals for an ERA-NET consist of? [Back](#)

Proposals must include Part A (administrative forms such as addresses and budget overview) and Part B (the actual proposal). These are described in great detail in the two guides for proposers for ERA-NET (one for CAs and another one for SSAs) and the "Some suggestions for the preparation of an ERA-NET Co-ordination Action" (see at <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/era-net.htm>). In the FAQs which follow, some specific points will be further clarified.

4.3 When will the ERA-NET call(s) be launched? [Back](#)

An open call inviting proposals for ERA-NET activities (co-ordination actions and a specific support actions) has been published in the Official Journal of the European Communities on 17 December 2002 and has been revised in an amendment published on 17 December 2003. The text can be found on <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/calls.cfm> and at <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/era-net.htm>.

The first closure date was 3 June 2003 (17:00 Brussels time) with an indicative budget of 35 M€ 14 CAs and 18 SSAs have been funded. The next closure dates will be 2 March 2004 (indicative budget of 37 million €) and 5 October 2004 (indicative budget of 23 million €)

From March 2004 onwards there will be a closure date roughly every six months up to October 2005.⁶

Ongoing ERA-NETs intending to enlarge the scope of their activities and/or their partnership may submit a supplementary proposal at any of the foreseen closure dates or at the deadline (see 1.8 above).

A word about open calls for proposals: In the frame of an open call for proposals, proposals can be submitted any time between the opening of the call (17 December 2002) and the final deadline (closure of the call) which for ERA-NETs is currently set to

⁶ Please note that this date may be changed. Proposers are invited to check updates of the call for proposals and of the Work Programme for latest changes. Please note also that it is likely that proposals for SSAs can only be submitted up to the closure date of October 2004.

October 2005. In order to plan the evaluations, the Commission has set a number of intermediary closure dates. Proposals received by a given closure date and time will be evaluated in a specified evaluation session which will take place a few weeks after the closure date. A proposal which has missed a cut-off date is considered submitted for the next closure date, while a proposal which has missed the final deadline is ineligible.

4.4 When do proposals have to arrive (important changes with respect to the past!)?

[Back](#)

All proposals, whether sent electronically (only on-line using the online submission tool "EPSS"), by post or by express courier, or carried by hand, have to arrive at the appropriate address given in the call for proposals by the time and date indicated. Closure times are carefully enforced.

The first cut-off date was 3 June 2003 at 17:00 (Brussels time)

4.5 How are the proposals to be submitted?

[Back](#)

The proposals have to be sent or delivered to the address specified in the call for proposals for the chosen delivery method. The Commission staff cannot deal with any proposals sent or given to them directly.

a) The addresses for ERA-NET proposals submitted on CDROM, diskette, or paper are as follows:

1) Proposals sent by post must be received by the Commission at the following address:
FP6-Research Proposals
Call identifier: ERA-NET-1-CA-SSA
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

2) Proposals delivered by hand or by representatives (including by private courier) must be delivered to the following address:
FP6-Research Proposals
Call identifier: ERA-NET-1-CA-SSA
European Commission
Rue de Genève, 1
B-1140 Brussels

Proposers are invited to use the sub-identifiers for the call as specified in the amendment to the call text published on 17 December 2003.

b) Proposals submitted electronically must be submitted using the online submission tool "EPSS".

N.B.: Submissions by email or by fax are not accepted

4.6 What is the “normal” duration of an ERA-NET project? [Back](#)

a) Co-ordination actions: each ERA-NET should last sufficiently long enough to have a durable impact on the research programmes involved. Durations of up to 5 years may be envisaged.

b) Specific support actions: one year maximum.

4.7 What is a pre-proposal check? [Back](#)

A pre-proposal check is a service which the Commission offers in the ERA-NET scheme to potential proposers in order to avoid the expensive preparation of a proposal which would not fulfil the basic criteria. The Commission advice will be purely informal and neither the proposers nor the Commission are bound by it.

Advice and guidance will be given concerning

- the conditions for participation (e.g. eligibility of the consortium); this check is strongly recommended for all ERA-NET proposals taking account of the special conditions applicable to participants
- the general conformity of the proposed work with respect to the scope and content of the ERA-NET Work Programme
- any other aspects which may assist in supporting the eligibility of the eventual proposal

Under no circumstances will the Commission make a judgement about the quality of an outline proposal submitted for pre-proposal checking.

The evaluators will not be informed about any advice the Commission might have given at a pre-proposal check.

This service will be offered until a few weeks or a month before a cut-off date and before the deadline in October 2005 (for the cut-off date of 3 June 2003: until 16 May 2003).

Please use the pre-proposal check form in the particular guide for proposers (see <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/pre-prop.htm>). These forms may be faxed or emailed.

4.8 What is proposal pre-registration? [Back](#)

Proposers are invited to register their intention to submit a proposal. This is not mandatory and there is no penalty if the proposal is not submitted. The Commission uses this information for the preparations of the evaluations of the proposals which start shortly after the closure dates.

4.9 How are the forms to be filled in?

[Back](#)

The guidelines for proposers and the electronic forms contain the basic instructions. Below, only a few points which are not always easy will be addressed:

- i) the legal entity must be exactly the name of the ministry, research council or foundation as registered.
- ii) a spreadsheet to present an overview of the budget is available from the help desk (it corresponds to the Contract Preparation Form A3.1)
- iii) the cost model must be the same as the cost model already used in other FP-VI contracts. In case you want to change, please contact the Commission.
- iv) on the form A2, the activity type and the legal status of the various organisations are asked for:

Activity Type

The category "OTHERS" is to be used the case of ministries and a number of other public bodies.

Legal Status

The legal status of contractors in FP6 has to be characterised in several aspects, which are summarized in the set of questions:

Governmental or private?
Commercial or non-commercial?

A governmental organisation is one owned by the state and/or acts on behalf of and represents the state or whose legal personality cannot be distinguished from the state. A private organisation is one whose legal personality is independent from the state (or any organ of that state) in which it is established.

.All ministries are obviously governmental organisations.

But for research organisations and other bodies which are not part of a ministry the situation is quite different. It has here to be noted that research institutes and agencies owned by the government are never governmental, but they are public. They are often established according to private law and can even be commercial companies.

In the sense of the FP6 participation rules, a public body is a public sector body or a legal entity governed by private law with a public service mission providing adequate financial guarantees.

Governmental organisations are public bodies by definition.

In addition:

- Please note also that only Governmental organisations can be national or international (i.e. intergovernmental, such as UNO, ESA, CERN, EMBL). Please insert "INO" for international organisation

- private commercial organisations have to specify the exact type (e.g. SA, Ltd., GmbH, physical person) in part B of the proposal.

Legal entity							
Governmental				Private			
Commercial		Non-commercial		Commercial		Non-commercial	
National	International (European interest Yes/No)	National	International (European interest Yes/No)	Public body	Non-public body	Public body	Non-public body

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V Eligibility check and evaluations of proposals

5.1 What is the eligibility check?

[Back](#)

Immediately after proposals have been received, the Commission checks them for eligibility, i.e. if they are complete, that they contain both the forms 'A' and part B, that they have arrived before the deadline (or cut-off date), if the requirements for the consortium are met i.e. if there is at least the required minimum of partners and if all the partners are eligible.

Proposers are invited to contact the helpdesk to check the eligibility of participants before submitting a proposal in order to avoid that a proposal is ineligible because of ineligible participants.

5.2 What are the specifics of the evaluation process?

[Back](#)

The evaluations will be performed through a one step procedure following the "peer review principle".

External independent evaluators give advice to the Commission services on the quality of the proposals.

A written evaluation summary report will be made available to the proposers. The evaluation criteria are described in annex 'B' of the workprogramme (<http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/home.html>) and in the call text.

More information on the evaluations can be found in the Guidelines on proposal evaluation and project selection procedures (<http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm - evalproe>), and, if you are interested, in the Guidance Notes for ERA-NET evaluators (to be put in the near future on <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/era-net.htm>).

5.3 Who are the evaluators of ERA-NET proposals?

[Back](#)

In the context of the ERA-NET scheme "Peers" means firstly "programme managers and makers". In addition, high level scientific expertise will have to be ensured as well. Therefore, the independent experts who will evaluate an ERA-NET proposal will normally be a combination of high level programme managers with wide expertise in S&T fields other than the field of the ERA-NET proposal under evaluation and of high level technical experts who will have an overview of the field of the proposal.

5.4 What will be the evaluation criteria?

[Back](#)

The evaluation criteria are described in the annex 'B' of the Work Programme and in the call text (<http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/home.html> or <http://www.cordis.lu/coordination/era-net.htm>).

It should be noted that the criteria differ for Co-ordination Actions and for Specific Support Actions, and that there are 3 additional criteria for the ERA-NET CAs.

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VI Financial aspects

6.1 Which costs can be supported?

[Back](#)

a) Co-ordination actions : implementation of an ERA-NET proposal.

The financial support from the Community will be limited to the costs of the co-ordination/networking activities undertaken to implement the ERA-NET. A maximum of 100% of the eligible co-ordination/networking costs as defined in the model contract may be covered. In addition consortium management costs will be covered at 100% up to a maximum of 7% of the total EU contribution (also as defined in the model contract). No support will be provided for the research activities themselves, for which the members of the ERA-NET will be expected to use their own resources i.e. they will be funded nationally or regionally.

Community funding for an individual ERA-NET could be as high as 3M€ for a duration of up to 5 years.

b) Specific Support Actions

SSAs are normally aimed at the preparation of an ERA-NET. Typically the following activities could be funded with a maximum of 100% (as defined in the model contract): working and expert groups, communication activities or preparatory studies (see SSA guide for proposers for more details). In addition consortium management costs will be covered at 100% up to a maximum of 7% of the total EU contribution (also as defined in the model contract).

Community funding could be as high as 200,000€ for a duration of one year and will be given to cover a part of these preparation costs.

6.2 What are the eligible costs? What detail is required?

[Back](#)

For costs to be eligible for reimbursement, they need to be actual, necessary for the implementation of the project, economic, determined in accordance with the usual accounting rules of the participants, etc. It is recalled that under the ERA-NET scheme the costs of the actual research are not eligible for Community funding, but only the co-ordination and management costs.

In the proposal the budget should be presented at "management level detail". This means that the detail should be sufficient for the evaluators and the Commission staff to understand how much money will be used for what. Please note that both the evaluators and the Commission services must be able to assess the correctness of the budget. As a guidance, the budget should be broken down by type of activity and major budgetary posts, including any substantial sub-contracting. All figures should be budgetary figures.

The cost estimates must be given for the full duration of the proposed ERA-NET.

6.3 Which cost models/bases and rates are applicable to ERA-NETs?

[Back](#)

In the 6th Framework Programme, each contractor applies his usual accounting rules. Further, the Commission has defined 3 cost models (cf. annex II of the model contract):

- **Full Cost with actual indirect costs (FC)**
In this model, eligible direct and indirect costs are charged by the contractors.
- **Full Cost with indirect flat rate costs (FCF)**
In this model, eligible direct costs and a flat rate for indirect costs are charged. This flat rate applied is 20% of all direct eligible costs minus the cost of sub-contracts.
- **Additional Costs with indirect flat rate costs (AC)**
In this model, eligible direct additional costs and a flat rate for indirect costs are charged. The flat rate is equal to 20% of all direct additional costs minus the cost of sub-contracts.

Direct costs, direct additional costs and indirect costs are defined below:

- **Direct cost** are all costs that fall under the definition of eligible costs which can be charged directly to the project, and are determined by the contractor in accordance with its usual accounting practices;
- **Direct additional cost**, are direct costs additional to the normal recurring costs of the contractor and not covered by any other sources of funding. For direct additional costs of personnel, there are three possibilities to charge these costs to the contract:
 - personnel with a temporary contract for working under the Community contract concerned ;
 - personnel with a temporary contract with a view to completing a doctorate ;
 - personnel whose employment contract depends wholly or in part on additional external financing. In this case, costs charged to the project must exclude all costs covered by normal recurring financing.

In practice, for ERA-NETs, the main difference between AC and FC is the fact that in the AC model, permanent staff whose employment contract does not depend on the ERA-NET, but is permanent, cannot be charged (except in the 7% management costs).

- For contractors working on the **full cost model**, **indirect costs** are all eligible costs determined by the contractor, in accordance with its usual accounting practices, which are not directly attributable to the project but are incurred in direct relation to the direct costs of the project.
- For those contractors using either of the flat rate models (FCF, AC) a flat rate (20%) is applied to the direct costs to cover the indirect costs.

The model contract defines which consortium/project management costs will be eligible for support at the 100% rate. The contract will also specify the maximum percentage of the Community contribution (up to 7%) that can be used to support these consortium/project management costs.

In the case of ERA-NET co-ordination actions, the maximum rates of Community contribution to a participant's costs will be 100% for networking activities and 100% (with a ceiling of 7% of the total EU contribution) for consortium/project management activities.

In the case of SSAs, the maximum rate of the Community contribution is 100% of the preparatory activities.

In all ERA-NETs (CAs and SSAs), the indirect costs (overheads) will be limited to 20 % of its direct eligible costs (again without subcontracting).

It should be noted that a contractor is obliged to keep the same cost model throughout the duration of FP-VI (with some possibilities of moving from AC to FCF or FC, and from FCF to FC).

6.4 Can you choose the Cost model you like best?

[Back](#)

No, the following rules apply:

Access to a cost model depends on the type of legal entity concerned:

- All legal entities can use the FC model with the exception of physical persons ;
- Physical persons are obliged to use the AC model;
- Non-commercial or non-profit organisations established either under public law or private law and international organisations may choose one of the AC, FCF or FC models. However, only those non-commercial or non-profit organisations which do not have an accounting system that allows the share of their direct and indirect costs relating to the project to be distinguished may opt for the AC model.
- Legal entities defined as SMEs have the choice between the FC and FCF model.

Consequently, most ERA-NET participants will therefore be able to choose between AC and FC/FCF. But, it has to be remembered that each contractor must apply the same cost reporting model in all contracts established under the Sixth Framework Programme, i.e. once one is chosen, it must be used for all FP-VI contracts, with the following "upgrading possibilities":

- any legal entity which is eligible to opt for the AC model in a first contract can change to the FCF or the FC model in a later contract. If it does so, it must then use the new cost reporting model in subsequent contracts;
- any legal entity which is eligible to opt for the FCF model in a first contract can change to the FC model in a later contract. If it does so, it must then use the new cost reporting model in subsequent contracts.

6.5 What has changed between FP-V and FP-VI?

[Back](#)

There are several important changes between FP-V and FP-VI:

- The Commission no longer defines the cost categories for everybody, but will accept those used in the contractor's accounting system. This does not mean that for clarity reasons the budget should not be broken down according

to cost categories. On the contrary, "management level detail" just means that the management should understand where the money goes.

- The overhead for the Full Cost Flat rate has now been set to 20% for all the direct eligible costs (without sub-contracting) for all FP-VI activities and the EU contribution for the consortium management costs is at 100% rate, with a ceiling that has been set to a maximum 7% of the total EU contribution.
- There is only one category of contractors (no more assistant contractors).

Other changes include:

- Collective responsibility (exception foreseen for state bodies).
- requirement for Audit certificates
- changes in the cost models

It should be noted that these changes are of a general nature and not specific to the ERA-NET scheme.

6.6 Who can get money?

[Back](#)

Basically any legal entity from an EU Member State, from a Candidate Country or from another Associated Country can get costs reimbursed. Also, International Organisations of European Interest (an international organisation the majority of whose members are European Union Member States or Associated States, and whose principal objective is to promote European scientific and technological co-operation) can get a part of their costs reimbursed. If there are other participants (Third Countries, International organisations), their involvement must be motivated (it must be necessary). Funding can only be foreseen if essential. Proposers are invited to include clear motivations for these last cases in the proposals.

VII Legal aspects and Contract

7.1 What does the contract for an ERA-NET contain?

[Back](#)

The contract with the Commission will establish the rights and obligations of participants. It might include among others:

- A core text specifying the scope, duration, amount of the Community grant, reporting schedule and payment modalities, and the list of initial participants;
- A technical annex (annex I) containing the objectives of the ERA-NET, a description of the joint activities, a description of the role of the participants, a description of the deliverables, ethical provisions, and a description of the management and governance structures;
- General conditions (annex II) common to all FP-VI instruments, covering standard legal and administrative provisions, the IPR regime if necessary, and standard financial provisions among others
- some forms (e.g. form A for the accession to the contract)

In some cases, special conditions will be added to the contract.

The model contract can be downloaded from <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm> and from <http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/working-groups/model-.html>.

7.2 With whom will the Commission sign the contract?

[Back](#)

The contract will be signed between the Commission and all the participants. On the practical side, it should be noted that the contract will enter into force upon signature by the co-ordinator and the Commission. The co-ordinator will then have to ensure that the other participants accede to the contract within a certain deadline, through the signature of a simplified form (i.e. the "form A").

In the case of a regrouping of participants in a legal entity like an EEIG, this legal entity will sign the contract on behalf of the individual members of that association

7.3 When will successful proposers get their contract? When will the contract start?

[Back](#)

In order to accelerate the procedures and reduce the time from evaluation to entry into force of the contract, the contract will enter into force immediately after the signature by the co-ordinator and the Commission. It can be expected that this will be approximately 6 months from the cut-off date or the deadline i.e. most likely in December 2003 for the first cut-off date.

Please note that the starting date of the project is normally not the same as the date on which the contract enters into force. The starting date of the project is defined in the contract. The starting date of the project is the date which determines from which day onward costs can be reimbursed.

7.4 What are the responsibility and liability of the participants? [Back](#)

Implementation of an ERA-NET action shall be the collective responsibility of the participants.

Each participant shall also be liable for the use of the Community financial contribution in proportion to its share of the project up to a maximum of the total payments it has received.

Where a participant is an international organisation, a public body or a legal entity whose participation to the indirect action is guaranteed by a State, this participant is solely responsible for its own debt and shall not bear the debt of any other participant.

When several legal entities are grouped in a common legal entity acting as a single participant the liability of its members shall be defined according to the law under which this common legal entity was established.

7.5 Is it necessary to conclude a consortium agreement? [Back](#)

Although the call for proposals does not require that participants make a consortium agreement, the participants may wish to conclude one.

There are non-binding guidelines prepared by the Commission (<http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/find-doc.htm>).

7.6 What will be the intellectual property aspects? [Back](#)

As an illustration of the application of FP-VI IPR rules to ERA-NETs, the IPR rules for FP6 would apply to any documents, software or databases created in the context of a networking or of a mutual opening of research activities.

However, the IPR rules for FP6 will not apply to the results of the national or regional programmes being co-ordinated or networked. These results will be governed by the respective applicable national or regional rules.

7.7 Are there requirements to disseminate results? [Back](#)

Yes, all results from the ERA-NET itself are to be disseminated unless this affects the protection or use of the results by the ERA-NET participants. (e.g. the guidelines for an evaluation system or the report on the research needs identified in the ERA-NET).

The results from the research funded nationally fall under national rules.

7.8 Which reports will be required?

[Back](#)

At the end of each scientific reporting period (as defined in the contract and in annex 1, e.g. 18 and 36 months following the start of the ERA-NET and at the end for a 48 month contract), the consortium will submit to the Commission the following reports for that precise period:

- a) a periodic activity report
- b) a periodic management report on that period including financial report
- c) a report on the distribution of the *Community* financial contribution between *contractors* made during that period
- d) supplementary reports required by any annex to the *contract*.

After the end of each period for which an audit certificate is required (normally at the end of the first reporting period and at the end of the project), the *consortium* shall submit the audit certificates provided by each *contractor*.

After the end of the *project*, in addition to the documents referred to above on the last period, the *consortium* shall submit the following final reports to the Commission:

- a) a final activity report covering all the work, objectives, results and conclusions, and the final *plan for using and disseminating knowledge*, including a summary of all the latter;
- b) a final management report covering the full duration of the *project*
- c) supplementary reports required by any annex of the *contract*
- d) a report on the distribution between *contractors* made after the end of the *project* of the *Community* financial contribution,

Details of the required reports will be set out in the contract (annexes I and II) and the reporting guidelines

7.9 Can tasks be sub-contracted?

[Back](#)

Yes, but within strict limits. Core tasks can never be subcontracted out.

Certain activities (e.g. computer programming) which cannot be done by the programme managers themselves can be subcontracted. The contract will define the limits for subcontracting. It has to be noted that the elements to be subcontracted can only cover a limited part of the project and should clearly be indicated in the technical annex of the contract.

However, some activities such as the consortium management cannot be contracted out⁷.

Other common sub-contracting costs in ERA-NET are costs fees for experts.

It should be noted that no overheads can be charged on sub-contracts.

Further, it has to be noted that the direct temporary engagement of a person is not sub-contracting, but a labor agreement.

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⁷ Technical assistance for the consortium management may be contracted out.

8.1 How will the project be monitored?

[Back](#)

The Commission services will monitor the progress of the ERA-NET so as to ensure proper execution of the work according to the terms of the contract, to protect the Community's financial interests and to ensure maximum synergy and coherence with other actions within the Sixth Framework Programme.



9.1 What are the differences between ERA-NET, EUREKA and COST? [Back](#)

The ERA-NET scheme aims at the co-ordination and networking of national or regional research programmes. This is quite different from EUREKA and COST.

EUREKA is an inter-governmental initiative aimed at the funding of industrially relevant transnational research projects, while COST is an intergovernmental framework for the co-ordination of research at the pan-European level.

9.2 What are the differences between an ERA-NET project and an "Article 169 project"? [Back](#)

Article 169 of the Treaty establishing the European Community enables the Community to participate in research programmes undertaken by several Member States, including a participation in the structures created for the execution of those programmes.

Article 169 goes beyond the co-ordination and the co-operation of national programmes developed through the ERA-NET scheme. Indeed in the case of an "Article 169 project",

(i) The Community contributes financially to the national programmes undertaken by the Member States while in the case of an ERA-NET, only the co-ordination costs of strategic activities developed by programme managers and makers are supported by the Community. Article 169 implies a real co-operation between the Member States involved by way of a joint execution/implementation of either their RTD programmes, parts of them or new activities related to such programmes

(ii) The decision making process may be more complex for an "Article 169 project" since the adoption of an "Article 169 project" has to be agreed upon by both the Council and the European Parliament following the so-called "co-decision procedure", while in the case of an ERA-NET project the Commission selects the proposals to fund in accordance with the rules established for FP-VI.

"Article 169 proposals" should be on topics related to the scientific and technological priorities of the EU Framework Programme for RTD, while ERA-NETs can be developed in any field of science and technology.

Another difference is that "Article 169" is an instrument in its own right whereas the ERA-NET scheme is a general scheme which is put into place by FP-VI instruments (Co-ordination Actions and Specific Support Actions).