

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT FUNDING REVIEW 2007-13

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROJECT PROPOSERS



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by Europa Media PSC.

Budapest
March 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

The overall aim of the Energy and Environment Funding Review is to summarise the new elements of energy, environment and transport related funds available in the new financial period of the European Union. There are several sources aiming to support these fields with different applications and selection criteria. The following pages provide a brief overview about the funds of the current period based on the experiences gathered in 2007 and on the changes compared to the previous period. This study is primarily meant for project proposers, who intend to brave the next round of EU calls, but could be interesting for decision makers as well.

2. E&E EU FUNDS

Environmental and (renewable) energy topics are among the highest priorities of the 2007-2013 budgetary period and there is an abundance of direct and indirect funding programmes available. A significant proportion of the funds are centrally managed in Brussels (e.g. the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme, FP7, LIFE+) whereas others are decentralised and implemented by the National Authorities (e.g. Structural Funds).

The Seventh Framework Programme is the most significant source of funding for the three fields, with a combined contribution of 905.26 million euro available for 2007, 15.4% of the total FP7 budget in 2007. The budgets of LIFE+ and IEE are dedicated entirely to the energy and environment fields, totalling 187 million and 52 million euro respectively. The share of the Structural Funds' budget concerning the three fields is defined by the individual Member States. More detailed information can be found through national links or through National Contact Points (NCPs).

Table 1: Budgets of Energy, Environment and Transport Funds in 2007

EU Funds	Direct			Indirect
	FP7	IEE	LIFE+	Structural Funds
Environment	€200,000,000	€ 52,000,000	€ 187,000,000	Varies by country
Energy	€237,300,000			
Transport	€467,960,000			

It is clear that FP7 is the biggest contributor to the three fields, but when looking for funding sources IEE and LIFE+ should not be ignored. Funding under FP7 is dedicated mainly to research activities and actions supporting research. While research is extremely important for energy, the environment and transport, especially in today's conscientious society and the race toward sustainable development, research is not the only area that can contribute to improvement and innovation in these fields. IEE and LIFE+ both work toward innovation and improvements in the energy and environment sectors, but through different channels and means that are all meant to be complementary to one another.

From an EU policies point of view, each of these instruments, in the broadest sense, are targeted to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. Speaking specifically for the energy and environment fields, the EU Sustainable Development Strategy¹, Environmental Technologies Action Plan² (ETAP) and the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme³ (6th EAP) are the major guidelines that constitute the policy backdrop for the establishment and implementation of these programmes and funding schemes.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/sds2001/index_en.htm

² http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/sds2001/index_en.htm

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/index.htm>

A practical example - Environment, being a key policy area for the EU, is allocated significant financing during the 2007-2013 budgetary period. Funding opportunities for different types of activities are available through different funding schemes including Structural Funds, FP7, LIFE+ and the eco-innovation scheme of CIP. Below is an example concerning hypothetical project ideas and corresponding funding schemes.

Table 2: Project types and corresponding funding scheme

Programme	FP7	LIFE+	CIP - eco-innovation	Structural Funds
Project ideas				
Establishing a waste composting and recycling centre				✓
Contribution to the conservation of biodiversity through demonstration of a proven methodology		✓		
Development of models for the integrated ecological assessment of water bodies to quantify climate change impacts	✓			
Introducing a clean production process in the manufacturing industry with an aim to reduce complex organic chemical substances			✓	

The above table shows targeting of possible projects in the field of environment according to different European programmes. This example is for indication purposes only and shall not be taken as a definitive guideline. Each project idea should be assessed together with all the activities planned vis-a-vis the Guide for Applicants of the programmes.

Generally speaking, research and technological development (RTD) activities should be targeted at FP7; market exploitation, take-up measures, and dissemination related actions at CIP; projects focusing on the implementation of environmental policies and relevant legislation at LIFE+; and any investment-type activity should be directed at Structural Funds.

To have a solid understanding of the type of activities supported under each programme, see funded project examples in projects databases of different programmes:

- » FP6 Projects Database
<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/projects.htm>
- » LIFE Projects Database
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm>
- » IEE Projects Database
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/projects/index_en.htm
- » Structural Funds Success Stories
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/index_en.cfm

3. SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME (FP7)

The Seventh Framework Programme is the only programme in the new budget period where calls have closed and initial results are available. The following table shows the structure and highlights the relevant parts of FP7 including the budget and number of calls published in 2007.

Table 3: FP7 programme structure, budget and calls

Specific Programmes and Themes	Budget in 2007 (€)	Ratio to overall Budget (€)	Number of calls
Cooperation	4 541 643 000	77.36%	27
Information & communication technologies	1 502 850 000	25.60%	3
Health	1 186 000 000	20.20%	2
Transport (including aeronautics)	467 960 000	7.97%	7
Nanosciences, nanotechnologies	400 493 000	6.82%	4
Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Biotechnology	302 090 000	5.15%	2
Energy	237 300 000	4.04%	2
Environment (including Climate Change)	200 000 000	3.41%	1
Security	80 300 000	1.37%	1
Socio-economic Sciences and the Humanities	61 050 000	1.04%	1
Space	34 500 000	0.59%	1
Other	69 100 000	1.18%	3
Capacities	497 134 000	8.47%	19
People	493 650 000	8.41%	12
Ideas	289 500 000	4.93%	1
Euratom	48 650 000	0.83%	2
Total	5 870 577 000	100.00%	61

Source: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html

It can be noted from the above figures that the Cooperation specific programme was allocated over three-quarters of the entire 2007 budget of FP7. As a result, the highest competition is observed within the Cooperation specific programme, which incorporates the 10 thematic areas.

A total of 905.26 million euro available in 2007 for the Energy, Environment and Transport themes in the Cooperation Specific Programme of FP7. This represents one-sixth of the total 2007 FP7 budget. It is worth mentioning that environment is an important horizontal topic (especially in conjunction with the ICT, Health and Food themes) and is also an important priority under the Capacities and Ideas Specific Programmes. It can be estimated that the total amount of funding available for projects with relevance to environmental, energy and transport issues will be at least 3 billion euro for the entire budget period.

Environment

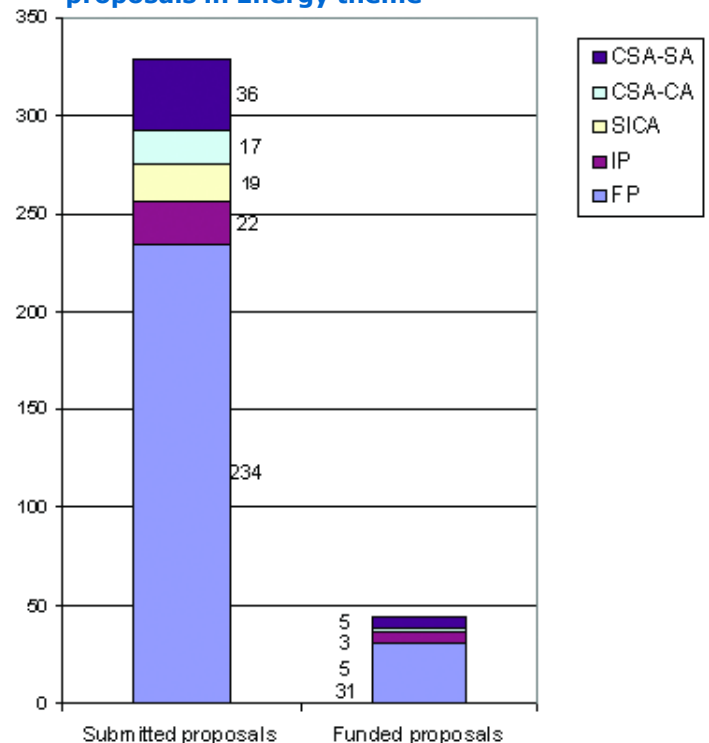
Under the Environment research theme of the Cooperation Specific Programme there was one call issued, closed on 2 May 2007, that covered 72 topics. DG Research received 600 proposals requesting over 1.8 billion euro, while the total amount that was available was only 200 million euro. The submitted proposals covered a wide range of research areas from climate change to health related environmental issues. Environmental issues are gaining recognition in the international political sphere as the world becomes more environmentally conscious. This has resulted in strong competition for environment related calls for proposals and only the most innovative proposals from the first round made it through to negotiations. Out of the total 600 submitted proposals, slightly more than half, 329 passed all evaluation thresholds. Furthermore, out of those 329 that passed, only 70 proposals will receive funding, which means, the overall success rate is approximately 12%.

Negotiations began in early autumn 2007. The second call, with a budget of 212 million euro, was published on 30 November 2007 with a submission deadline 25 February 2008. A combined call for the Environment and Nanotechnologies themes was also issued on 30 November 2007, with a budget of 10 million euro and deadline of 25 February 2008. The 2008 Environment work programme covers 5 broad activities, which are each broken down into sub-activities and areas.

Energy

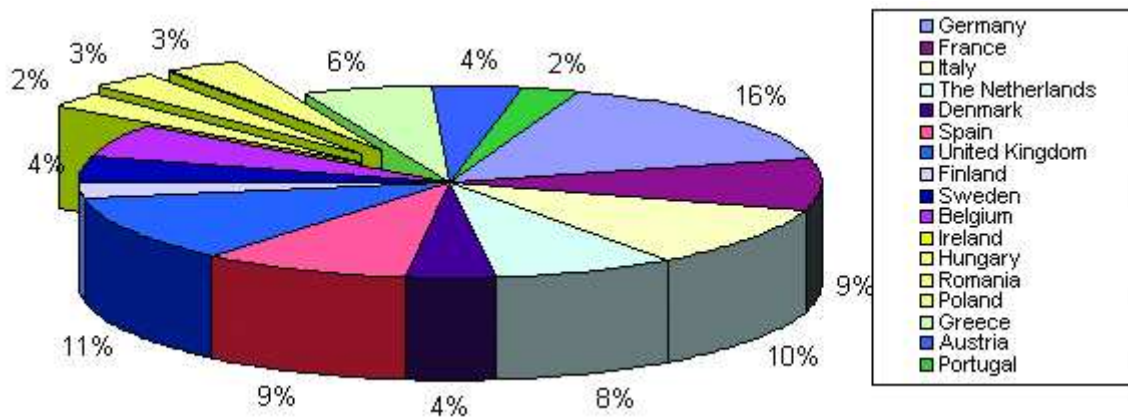
The call FP7-ENERGY-2007-1-RTD, the first call issued for the Energy theme, focused on long-term research, with a view to accelerate technology development. Under the first call 328 proposals were submitted and approximately 42 will be funded. Thus, the success rate is 12.8%, but this also varies by instrument. Some energy-related topics have not yet been issued calls, such as CO₂ storage, Geothermal, and other areas have been issued calls, but the success rates are relatively low (Hydrogen supply - 11.8%, Knowledge tools for energy-related policy making - 9.3%). In terms of funding instruments, the highest competition is among small and medium sized projects under Collaborative Projects, with a 13.25% success rate. The highest success rates are seen in the Integrated Projects (IP), 22.73%, the Coordination Actions (CSA-CA) 17.64%, and the Supporting Actions (CSA-SA) 13.89%. The requested 930 million euro compared to the planned budget of 109.3 million euro also helps confirm the high level of competition.

Figure 1: Submitted and selected proposals in Energy theme



Concerning geographical aspects, the number of submitted and funded projects is very concentrated. More than 50% of the project coordinators involved in the negotiation process are from four countries (Germany, France, Italy, and the Netherlands) and coordinators only from 12 countries all together. As a consequence, geographically covering Europe and involving third countries has not yet been achieved. Old Member States still dominate. The tendency is the same among project partners as only Hungarian organisations are presented among the coordinators and Romanian and Polish organisations among project partners.

Figure 2: Ratio of partners under call FP7-ENERGY-2007-1-RTD by country



Transport

200 proposals were submitted for the call FP7-AAT-2007-RTD that ended 3 May 2007, but only 36 will receive funding, which results in an 18% success rate. In a reverse trend, the EC has increased the initial funding from 153.48 million to 207 million euro. Approximately half of the available amount will go to four large projects. The rest will be divided between 26 collaborative research projects and six coordination and support actions aimed at stimulating the participation of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

**The statistical information was collected and gathered by Europa Media staff with contributions from various NCPs and official websites.*

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The first round of calls has closed, but the funding doesn't end there. Some of the 2008 Work Programmes have been published and already the second round of calls is underway. An Additional 529.6 million euro of EU support will be available for the Energy, Environment and Transport themes of FP7.

Table 4: FP7 calls for proposals in 2008

Themes	Calls	Publication date	Deadline	Budget (€)
Transport	FP7-AAT-2008-RTD-1	30 November 2007	7 May 2008	80 420 000
	The greening of air transport, increasing time efficiency, ensuring customer satisfaction and safety, improving cost efficiency, protection of aircraft and passengers, pioneering the air transport of the future, cross-cutting activities for implementation of the sub-theme programme.			
	FP7-SST-2008-RTD-1	30 November 2007	7 May 2008	102 220 000
	Greening of surface transport, encouraging modal shift and decongesting transport corridors, ensuring sustainable urban mobility, improving safety and security, strengthening competitiveness, cross-cutting activities for implementation of the sub-theme programme			
	FP7-SST-2008-TREN-1	30 November 2007	8 May 2007	36 000 000
	Greening of surface transport, encouraging modal shift and decongesting transport corridors, improving safety and security			
	FP7-TPT-2008-RTD-1	30 November 2007	7 May 2008	14 650 000
Cross-cutting activities for Programme Implementation				
Energy	FP7-ENERGY-2008-1	30 November 2007	26 February 2008	26 300 000
	Renewable electricity generation, renewable fuel production, CO2 capture and storage technologies for zero emission power generation, smart energy networks, energy efficiency and savings, horizontal programme actions			
	FP7-ENERGY-2008-FET	30 November 2007	26 February 2008	15 000 000
	Horizontal programme actions			
	FP7-ENERGY-2008-RUSSIA	30 November 2007	26 February 2008	4 000 000
	Renewable electricity generation, smart energy networks			
	FP7-ENERGY-NMP-2008-1	30 November 2007	26 February 2008	25 000 000
Horizontal programme actions, materials				
Environment	FP7-ENV-2008-1	30 November 2007	25 February 2008	212 000 000
	Climate change, pollution and risks, sustainable management of resources, environmental technologies, earth observation and assessment tools for sustainable development, horizontal actions			
	FP7-ENV-NMP-2008-2	30 November 2007	25 February 2008	10 000 000
Nanotechnologies for water treatment				

Source: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm>



4. CIP-INTELLIGENT ENERGY EUROPE

The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) aims to encourage the competitiveness of European enterprises. With small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as its main target, the programme supports innovation activities, provide better access to finance and deliver business support services in the various regions. It encourages a better take-up and use of information and communications technologies (ICT) and help develop the information society. It also promotes increased use of renewable energies and energy efficiency.

Any public or private organisation from the EU, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Croatia can apply for funding in the IEE programme.

Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) is one of the three operational programmes of the CIP and aims to:

- » foster energy efficiency and rational use of energy sources
- » promote new and renewable energy sources and energy diversification
- » promote energy efficiency and new energy sources in transport

The Programme is managed by the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI) and covers actions in the following fields:

1. Energy efficiency and rational use of resources (SAVE), including:
 - » improving energy efficiency and the rational use of energy, in particular in the building and industry sectors;
 - » supporting the preparation and application of legislative measures.
2. New and renewable energy resources (ALTENER), including:
 - » promoting new and renewable energy sources for centralised and decentralised production of electricity, heat and cooling, and biofuels, thus supporting the diversification of energy sources;
 - » integrating new and renewable energy sources into the local environment and the energy systems;
 - » supporting the preparation and application of legislative measures.
3. Energy in transport (STEER) to promote energy efficiency and the use of new and renewable energies sources in transport, including
 - » supporting initiatives relating to all energy aspects of transport and the diversification of fuels;
 - » promoting renewable fuels and energy efficiency in transport;
 - » supporting the preparation and application of legislative measures.
4. Integrated initiatives combining several of the aforementioned fields or relating to certain Community priorities. They may include actions integrating energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in several sectors of the economy and/or combining various instruments, tools and actors within the same action or projects¹.

Eco-innovation activities

Eco-innovation is not only a horizontal priority to be taken into consideration during the implementation of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, but also a budget of EUR 430 million is dedicated specifically to financing eco-innovation activities. The priorities for these actions include cleaner production processes, innovative environment-friendly products and services, and support to enterprises (especially SMEs) for greening business. Calls for eco-innovation are launched under the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) of CIP.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/call_for_proposals/doc/call_2007_en.pdf pages 2-3

A general call for proposals is issued annually and for 2007 52 million euro was made available for projects selected from the 435 proposals submitted, a 40% increase from the previous IEE call. In addition to increased funding rates it is now possible for local authorities to receive funding in order to establish energy agencies. Of the 435 proposals, 60 were specifically responding to this new initiative for establishing energy agencies. The next opportunity to apply for the IEE programme will not be until February 2008, but it is possible to visit the official website of IEE, http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/index_en.html, and view previously funded projects and areas of focus.

The following activities will be funded under the new call:

- » capacity building
- » building and spreading of know-how, skills and methods
- » exchanges of experience
- » development of market and intelligence
- » policy input
- » awareness raising and information provision
- » education and training

The IEE programme does not fund hardware type investments and technical research & development projects for energy efficiency and renewables².

² http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/call_for_proposals/index_en.htm



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5. LIFE+

With a budget of 2.143 billion euro for the 2007-2013 budget period, LIFE+ is a limited but focused funding instrument providing specific support for the development and implementation of Community environmental policy and legislation. The first call in the new period was published 28 September 2007 and covered the three components of the programme: Nature and Biodiversity, Environment Policy and Governance, Information and Communication. The deadline for the submission was 30 November 2007 and initial statistics were not yet available when this review went to publication. A total amount of 187 million euro was available for the first call, allocated to the individual Member States.

Table 5: LIFE+ budget by country

Country	Indicative amount	Country	Indicative amount	Country	Indicative amount
AT	EUR 3 509 000	FI	EUR 6 696 000	MT	EUR 2 148 000
BE	EUR 3 858 000	FR	EUR 16 357 000	NL	EUR 5 996 000
BG	EUR 4 025 000	EL	EUR 6 356 000	PL	EUR 8 858 000
CY	EUR 2 000 000	HU	EUR 4 673 000	PT	EUR 5 236 000
CZ	EUR 3 710 000	IE	EUR 2 944 000	RO	EUR 8 139 000
DE	EUR 21 762 000	IT	EUR 16 457 000	SE	EUR 7 685 000
DK	EUR 4 591 000	LT	EUR 2 574 000	SI	EUR 4 029 000
EE	EUR 3 098 000	LU	EUR 2 044 000	SK	EUR 2 857 000
ES	EUR 20 028 000	LV	EUR 2 500 000	UK	EUR 14 871 000

Source: LIFE+ Call for proposals 2007, page 3

Legal entities established in Member States are eligible for participation under LIFE+ (public and/or private bodies, actors and institutions may receive financing). Currently only expenditure within EU27 countries is eligible, although future participation of certain third countries is possible if supplementary appropriations are received.

The range of fields covered by LIFE+ is wide and diverse. Under LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity projects the principal targets were natural systems, natural habitats, wild flora and fauna, and biodiversity. The LIFE+ Environment Policy and Governance projects had twelve areas of concentration; climate change, water, air, soil, urban environment, noise, chemicals, environment and health, natural resources and waste, forests, innovation, and strategic approaches. The third element of LIFE+, Information and Communication projects target both policy decisions and citizens to ensure regular and effective information flow³.

Typically the rate of Community financial support in LIFE+ is a maximum of 50% of eligible costs, but there are some exceptions. A maximum co-financing rate of 75% is applicable to proposals targeting habitats/species of the Birds' and Habitats' Directives in LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity projects, and exceptionally, a maximum rate of 30% of eligible costs applies to proposals 'expected to generate substantial revenue' in LIFE+ Environment and Governance projects.

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/funding/lifeplus.htm>

6. STRUCTURAL FUNDS

Structural Funds, primarily the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), as well as the Cohesion Fund (CF) comprise the majority of EU spending and have targeted actions for energy, environment and transport. These funds and their budgets have been broken down in order to address three main objectives: Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment, and Territorial Cooperation. The budget allocation according to the objectives is 81.5%, to Convergence 16% to Regional competitiveness and employment, and 2.5% to European territorial cooperation from the total 308 billion euro for the 2007-2013 budget period.

Energy, environment and transport fields appear under all the three objectives.

Table 6: Relevant objectives of Structural Funds

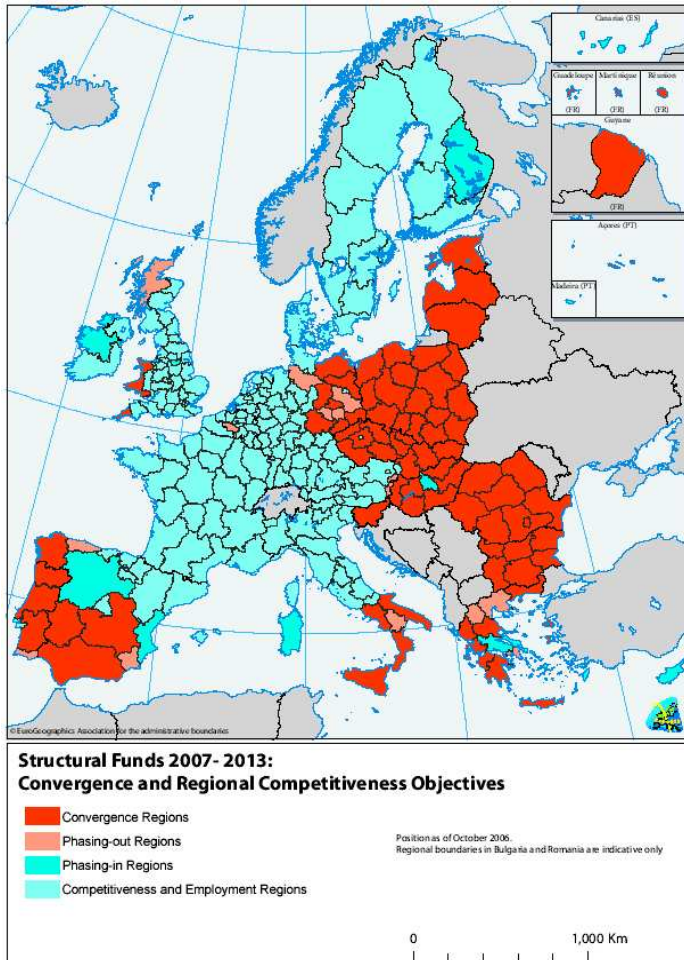
Objectives		Convergence	Regional competitiveness and employment	European Territorial Cooperation
SF	ERDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving security of supply, integrating environmental consideration Climate Change mitigation Improvement of energy efficiency and development of renewable energies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulation of energy efficiency and renewable energy production Development of efficient energy management systems Promoting clean and sustainable transport in urban areas Development of plans to adapt to climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-border environmental joint strategies Improved access to transport and cross border energy management systems
	ESF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchange of experiences and dissemination of good practices-Mechanism to improve good policy and programme design Support for interdepartmental coordination and dialogue between relevant private and public bodies Capacity building in delivery of policies and programmes 		x
CF		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trans-European transport networks Environment Areas related to sustainable development with environmental benefits energy efficiency and renewable energies, clean urban and public transport 	x	x

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/graph/graph_en.htm

One crucial remark at this point would be that no project could receive co-financing from two different EU programmes at the same time. In other words, it is not possible to get 50% co-financing for a project from Structural Funds and the remaining 50% from FP7. In EU jargon this is called "double financing" and proposers must strictly refrain from this. On the other hand, it is perfectly OK, for instance, to apply for funding under CIP to promote the take up of a completed RTD project under FP7.

The map below shows the eligible countries according their area of involvement.

Figure 3: Eligible countries in SF



The budget is allocated among the Member States according to population and need. The Member States are responsible for distributing the funding to eligible projects through the national and regional levels. Because national and regional authorities are responsible for implementing the funds and selecting the projects, the rules of participation, applying, reporting, etc., all vary according to the policies and practices of the Member States.

More information according to Member State policies can be found through the following link:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authority_en.cfm.




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7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Some general remarks on Energy and Environment projects: We have collected comments of project managers. Below is a compilation of why they do not want to participate in EU projects:

• <i>Limited resources for fundraising, e.g. proposal development and searching for information</i>
• <i>A multi-annual long-term project is quite a large commitment for an SME to commit resources</i>
• <i>Hard to identify and join a large consortium in time</i>
• <i>Unpredictability- resources and tasks can be reallocated between partners often at the cost of smaller companies</i>
• <i>Difficult to influence the bigger players in the consortium</i>
• <i>The risk of being kicked out at the last minute after having invested time and resources into proposal development can be very costly for a small company</i>
• <i>IPR issues - IPR are sensitive issues for a small company basing its activities on one or two patents</i>
• <i>Time consuming to search for proper updated information</i>
• <i>The complicated procedures require the involvement of experts and consultants in fund raising and proposal development - there are security and financial aspects to this</i>
• <i>Corporate espionage - the threat of SMEs being invited into a consortium by larger companies in order for the larger company to obtain vital information on the SME, such as financial check by competitors</i>
• <i>Management costs are limited to 7% and in most cases "reserved for the coordinator" while an SME, especially an inexperienced SME, can have significant costs for management activities (learning procedure)</i>
• <i>Lack of own resources/supplementary financing -difficult to come up with the own share</i>
• <i>Limited/unstructured information on the type of programmes, funds and practical rules</i>
• <i>To much information, difficult to find the relevant info</i>
• <i>Uncertainty - interim payment and final payment depend not only on the SMEs performance but the consortium as a whole</i>
• <i>Difficult to get involved in negotiations with the Commission as SMEs are generally not in the core team</i>
• <i>Bank guarantee requirement by the EC or by the consortium, Coordinator often imposes such requirements in their jurisdiction even if not required by the EU</i>
• <i>Adaptation problems between EU and national rules, taxation, VAT recuperation</i>
• <i>Inflexibility (binding contract)-there is no room for swift actions or following up developments by the market</i>
• <i>Liquidity/financial management problems</i>
• <i>Time-consuming - State of the art - proposal preparation, evaluation, and negotiations are time consuming and for some products, i.e. high tech, it may be better to ask for a bank loan</i>
• <i>Heavy reporting bureaucracy</i>
• <i>Changing rules from community programme to community programme</i>
• <i>Unfair flexibility - EC can be flexible in time and requirements while partners have to perform and deliver according to schedule</i>
• <i>Late payment can cause serious problems for a small company</i>
• <i>Universities are not serious about implementing and exploiting the research, they need SMEs only for an alibi so that they get the project funded</i>

Although we do not necessarily agree with all the comments above, these are the impressions of real proposers, who have submitted (or at least considered submitting) a project proposal under one or more of the programmes listed in this review. We suggest you read them carefully and make sure that applying for EU funds makes sense for your organisation.

We strongly recommend that you have a highly developed strategy and a very clear idea in your head for justifying the effort needed to put together a competitive project proposal. Money should not be the motivation, because if you do things properly each project will cost you about 25-50% of the total budget depending on whether you are a university, SME or large cooperation. Unless you are absolutely sure that you are able to fit the economics of an EU project into your organisation's financial plans we suggest that you forget about it.

The following quick cost-benefit analysis can help support the decision:

Disadvantages of EU projects

- » It is a time consuming process with a long wait between making the submission until the final decision, and then completing the project may take years. During this time there might be changes in external circumstances (e.g. economical: price increase, technological development, new solutions on the market, etc.) that may make your project idea obsolete or unrealisable. You are, however, bound in the Grant Agreement to complete the project. Making changes is extremely difficult when the agreement has been signed.
- » Working in a consortium has a negative side as well. For example, cultural differences often cause difficulties when implementing the project. You probably don't need all these partners after all. Implementing your idea on your own may ultimately take less time and effort.
- » The administrative burden of an EU project is immense. You need a really well prepared staff and a lot of time to fulfil all the requirements.

...

Advantages of EU projects

- » Support is non-refundable in most cases; using EU funds is therefore advantageous compared to getting loan and support from market sources, because these normally have to be repaid with interest on top.
- » You gain access to the resources of your partners: technological resources, their knowledge, IPR, etc. The relationships you form in a project will give a competitive advantage in the future, and it is becoming increasingly important to have established international relationships in today's globalised world.
- » You may identify new opportunities during projects, and for example develop intellectual property for subsequent use.

...

So think, before you apply and make sure that your EU project fits well into your business or research strategies. This is absolutely vital for SMEs, but may also be important for universities, where there are several other funding sources available with less administrative challenges (e.g. grants from national programmes, foundations, industry, etc).



If you believe that EU is the right place for you to request funding for your environmental project, here you have a couple of points to consider in order to make your proposal a winning proposal:

- » Be up-to-date; be familiar with the Work Programme of the particular Theme you are interested in. The entire Work Programme document (and any related documents such as info on public consultations, the work of Technology Platforms, directives, etc) is important if you want to give the impression of a proposer that really knows what's going on.
- » Involve experienced partners in your consortium; the most important feature is balance in terms of expertise and geography.
- » Pay due attention to EU policies and other horizontal (e.g. gender) issues (but only if they are truly relevant because it can be counterproductive if you address non-existing issues).
- » Partnership and management must be tailored to suit the project objectives and size.
- » Demonstrative presentation of the project's goals, necessity and importance, appropriate demonstration of the (scientific) content, always use references.
- » Professionally composed text properly formatted, use figures and diagrammes; use EU terms (but do not overdo this).
- » Make sure that you properly introduce yourself and your partners. The roles must be very clear. Key staff should be briefly introduced.
- » The evaluators still have limited time to read the proposals and they appreciate it if the chapters are concise and to the point. So be clear, to the point and convincing.
- » You can directly address the evaluation criteria; the best is if you have some members of your staff (those not involved in its preparation) pre-evaluate the proposal.

And remember: only ambitious projects built around excellent ideas to be implemented by a very strong consortium have a real chance. Being in (or leading) a good Consortium is the most important issue, so here is some good advice for consortium building:

- » It is recommended that only partners with good references be included in the consortium. Even if you are looking for a specific expertise or participants from a specific country, make sure that they have related international reference(s). Earlier framework projects are the best.
- » It is strongly advisable to establish a consortium 'core': 2-3 persons/institutions responsible for the preparation of the proposal and for the compilation of all required material.
- » During proposal preparation a considerable level of coordination is required but it is necessary for the Coordinator to distribute the work among the partners. It is always partner's input and new approaches that can turn a good proposal into an excellent proposal.
- » It is useful if the consortium members have worked together on previous projects. This can strengthen cooperation.
- » The members of the consortium should be capable of carrying out all activities with respect to the project so that there will be no need to involve subcontractors.
- » The activities and experiences of the individual members of the consortium should complement each other but also be unique. There must be a very clear reason why you have a particular partner in your project.

Before you submit a proposal, make certain your partners are reliable and that they are at your disposal. This helps you to eliminate disagreement and serious problems that might occur during negotiations or the implementation of the project. At the first sign of trouble get rid of the problematic partner, there are thousands of others in Europe that are willing to work hard!

The Official webpages of the funds:

FP7: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html
 LIFE+: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/index.htm>
 IEE: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/index_en.html
 SFs and CF: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm