

WORK PROGRAMME 2009

CAPACITIES

PART 3

REGIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

(European Commission C(2008)4566 of 26 August 2008)

Capacities Work Programme: Regions of Knowledge

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3. REGIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

Objectives

Strengthening the research potential of European regions, in particular by encouraging and supporting the development, across Europe, of regional “research-driven clusters” associating regional authorities, universities, research centres, enterprises and other stakeholders.

I. CONTEXT

The “*Regions of Knowledge*” initiative in FP7 responds to a need at European level to increase the overall capacity of regional players in enhancing science and technology based development. Its purpose is to enhance regions to strengthen their capacity for investing in and conducting research and technological development activities in a way which can contribute significantly to economic development. This shall maximise the potential for a successful involvement of regional actors in the European Research Area (ERA).

To this end, Regions of Knowledge will support the cooperation, development and integration of **regional research-driven clusters**¹. For the implementation of this work programme, regions shall not necessarily be defined along administrative boundaries nor according to the European statistical NUTS nomenclature.

Following the recommendations of the adopted guidelines² of the Scientific and Technical Research Committee of the EU (CREST) and the Communication from the Commission on the

¹ Research-driven clusters must be composed of at least three types of legal entities (so called 'triple helix'), namely:

- legal entities conducting research (universities, research organisations and research for-profit bodies); national entities conducting research can be accepted if their organisational structure is broken down at regional level and if the regional structure involved is located in the same region than the other components of the cluster; and
- business entities (large enterprises and SMEs as defined in the EC recommendation 2003/361/CE of 6 May 2003, OJ L 124/36, 20/05/2003); and
- regional/local authorities (local and regional government, regional development agencies); national entities can be accepted to represent regional authorities either in small Member States made up of only one NUTS II region or if their organisational structure is broken down at regional level and their regional representation is located in (or is effectively in charge of) the same region than the other components of the cluster; specialised regional entities, like for example regional energy agencies, can be accepted if they are in charge of the design and/or the implementation of the relevant regional policy.

Where appropriate research-driven clusters may involve as well, on top of the three previous categories, other regional/local entities such as technology transfer offices, science parks, chambers of crafts, commerce and industry, financial entities (such as banks and saving banks) and also management consultants (specialised consultants active in the technological or economic sector concerned can be accepted as representing the business side of the 'triple helix').

² "Coordinating the Framework Programme and the Structural Funds to support Research and Development" – CREST 1203/07 – 01.06.2007.

"Competitive European Regions through research and innovation: a contribution to more growth and more and better jobs"³, the "Regions of Knowledge" action will also seek to promote synergies between regional and research policies, primarily by supporting the development of regional research strategies which regional authorities can integrate into their economic development strategy as a basis for increased and more focused use of the Structural Funds as well as IPA (Instruments for Pre-accession Assistance) funds for R&D investment and activities. Activities will be implemented in close cooperation with the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), especially as regards the Entrepreneurship programme and its PRO-INNO Europe and Europe INNOVA components. Synergies will also be explored with the European Institute of Technology (EIT).

The "Regions of Knowledge" action therefore aims at:

- Fostering trans-national, including cross-border, co-operation between research driven clusters in areas or topics of common interest, either related to challenges from the globalisation of markets, technological change or the evolution of normative frames in the European context, as well as mutual learning between regional actors (legal entities conducting research, business entities, regional/local authorities)⁴ ;
- Improving links between regional authorities, legal entities conducting research and the local business community not only as partners in the development of specific goals or regional RTD policies, but also as joint partners in national or European initiatives;
- Developing joint action plans at the European level to increase regional economic competitiveness through research and technological development activities in traditional or emerging business sectors and by mobilising financial possibilities and other forms of support offered by national/regional authorities, the private sector and by Community programmes (RTD Framework Programme, CIP and the Structural Funds), in order to exploit the synergy between regional, national and Community programmes for research and economic development;
- Supporting the internationalization of the regional research-driven clusters;
- Mentoring regions with a less developed research profile to support their capacity in setting up and developing regional research-driven clusters.

Special attention will be given to innovative approaches fostering worldwide competitiveness and sustainable development of the economic activity. However, it must be underlined that clusters must really be based on research and development.

³ COM(2007) 474 final and SEC(2007)1045 – 16.08.2007.

⁴ Cross border cooperation for the implementation of this work programme is not limited to the eligible cross border regions (NUTS level III) of the Territorial Cooperation Objective of the Cohesion Policy and refers to adjacent regions: cross border cooperation remains a limited case of transnational cooperation

Approach for 2009

Proposals under the "Regions of Knowledge" action will be submitted by and the selected projects will be coordinated either by regional research-driven clusters established as a legal entity or by the regional/local authorities (or any regional entity they have mandated to implement their economic development and innovation policy) involved in the existing clusters.

The cluster as a whole may be represented through one legal entity. If such a legal entity does not exist, a legal arrangement⁵ between the members must exist for one member of the cluster to be allowed to legally represent all the others and the envisaged representative must have a clear mandate to represent all other members of the 'research driven cluster'. In cases where no legal entity can represent the cluster as a whole nor a representative can act on behalf of the other members, at least one legal entity conducting research, one business entity and one regional/local authority being part of the cluster shall be direct partners of the project consortium.

In any case each member of the cluster directly involved in the project's activities should be clearly identified in the proposal.

Clusters involved shall demonstrate in their proposal their current state of play in terms for example of membership (business and research entities), workforce (including researchers), number of students, turnover or GDP generated, foreign direct investment, R&D expenditure, collaborative projects, spin-offs, start-ups and patents generated, as well as services offered to their members and their financing. Partner entities conducting research have to be already and demonstrably involved in RTD activities supported by national, regional or European programmes that are closely linked to the economically relevant technological or scientific areas.

The clusters involved should also indicate in their proposal the potential for growth and competitiveness foreseen in the targeted sector through the proposed cooperation. Furthermore the proposed project should meet the topic set out in this work programme, in support to the emergence of lead markets as defined in the Lead Markets initiative⁶.

"*Regions of Knowledge*" will support consortia of partners representing at least three regional research-driven clusters from three different European Member States and/or Associated Countries.

The consultation process

Expert Groups' contributions have been taken into account and an FP7 Advisory Group for "Regions of Knowledge", representing public authorities and research entities has also contributed to the preparation of this action.

⁵ It can be an existing legal arrangement or a legal arrangement specifically elaborated before the submission of the proposal (or at least before the entry into force of the grant agreement) but its scope can not be limited to the participation and the duration of the project and must cover other activities implemented by the cluster.

⁶ See Commission communication, COM (2007) 860, 21/12/2007.

Activities

The 2009 Work Programme will develop "**Transnational cooperation between regional research-driven clusters**" by covering the following activities:

- Analysis, development and implementation of research agendas
- Mentoring of regions with a less developed research profile by highly developed ones
- Initiatives to improve integration of research actors and institutions in regional economies

II. CONTENT OF CALL

The activities listed on page 5 of this Work Programme will be implemented through the following area:

Area: 3.1. Transnational cooperation between regional research-driven clusters

The "Regions of Knowledge" action supports the development, cooperation and integration between innovative and dynamic research-driven clusters in order to have more and better RTD investments at regional level and support the European competitiveness worldwide. Projects must demonstrate a clear exploitation potential in their regions and should help actors in the regions to make the best use of EU instruments such as the Framework Programmes, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme or the Structural Funds.

Indicative available budget: EUR 16.15 million.

Topic: REGIONS-2009-1

Technical content/scope

In the 2009 call, proposals should support economic competitiveness and in particular the emergence of lead markets as defined by the Lead Market Initiative in the following sector: **Enhancing the sustainable use of natural resources and of the natural and man-made environment.**

This sector covers four themes:

- Water management, in quantitative (impact of climate change; natural hazards like floods) and qualitative terms (contamination of ground water systems and marine environment, preservation of biodiversity, water supply and sanitation systems);
- Forest management, with new forestry methods allowing energy and industrial uses with the development of new wood-based products, while preserving biodiversity and forests' other functions (prevention of soil erosion and of unwanted forest fires, protection of ground water quality, maintenance of soil organic matter levels, etc);
- Soil and land management, including new agricultural methods allowing energy and industrial uses of plants and crops and urban development, taking into account the impact of the built environment on the need for sustainable use and subsequent disposal of resources and the need to maintain soil organic matter levels ;
- And Waste management to increase recovery of high value products especially from end-of-life products.

Projects should favour innovative and cross-cutting approaches and the development of eco-technologies, notably based on life sciences, biotechnologies and biochemistry.

These themes support the emergence of five lead markets identified by the Commission: renewable energies (water, forest and soil management), bio-based products (water, forest and soil management), sustainable construction (forest management), protective textiles (water and waste management) and recycling (water, land and waste management).

Type of activities/work

The activities listed on page 5 of this Work Programme and linked to the area of **Transnational cooperation** will be implemented through "Coordination and Support Actions" (**Coordinating Action**), which will support projects covering all of the following steps:

- **Analysis and integration of research agendas of regional clusters**

Project partners will perform a detailed analysis of the state of play of the identified research-driven clusters and of additional regional capabilities around which research could be carried out. For the selected topic, the analysis will involve the identification of relevant issues and components, including:

- The existing regional RTD policies, plans and activities, their evolution and their impact;
- Regional public and private RTD actors, including financial ones (e.g. banks, business angels), and infrastructure and facilities;
- The strengths and weaknesses of the regions concerned in terms of their capacity to produce, transfer and use knowledge;
- The existing regional cluster policy and initiatives;
- Economic development strengths, opportunities and needs, and economic development policies;
- European and international context, with a reference to possible links to existing European Technology platforms, Joint technology initiatives or other European projects.

This analysis will cover the possibilities of synergies and opportunities for mutual learning and exchange of best practices as well as possibilities of mentoring for capacity building, with identification of the targeted emerging European clusters, if not already identified in the proposal, and of cooperation possibilities between the regional actors involved in regional research driven clusters. It can also cover the preparation of an international cooperation strategy, with the identification of potential targeted clusters from third countries and of cooperation possibilities in RTD and innovation support services with these clusters

It shall be made with the involvement of local stakeholders concerned as part of the consensus building and dissemination processes around the project.

The output shall be a directory of RTD offer and demand, a global analysis including an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) from an economic

and R&D perspective and an analysis of the complementarities of the partners involved in the consortium for the particular scientific and technological domain or economic sector targeted by the project. It shall also include an analysis of the complementarities of the emerging European clusters targeted for mentoring activities and, where appropriate, of the foreign clusters targeted for international cooperation.

- **Initiatives to improve integration: definition of a Joint Action Plan**

Project partners will define a Joint Action Plan (JAP) that expresses their strategy to drive economic development through research and technological development activities in a selected topic or economic sector. This JAP may comprise regionally specific activities. It will include the design of measures such as:

- Increasing researcher mobility, including mobility between research and industry,;
- Improving and sharing RTD infrastructure and other facilities;
- Supporting relevant (collaborative) research related projects;
- Enhancing skills and knowledge transfer between business entities and between research entities and business entities, in particular SMEs, through networking;
- Improving availability of and access to SME and innovation support services, including the facilities provided under the cluster platforms financed by Europe INNOVA;
- Facilitating access to private and/or public funding for RTD and innovation, including through the implementation of pre-commercial procurement;
- Other relevant business support measures;
- International cooperation activities, such as visits, conferences, workshops, exchange of clusters' staff, in order to finalize the definition of the international strategy, if need be, and test it.

On top of the above listed measures the Joint Action Plan must include the following measures:

- Mentoring activities for capacity building in regions with a less-developed research-profile so that they analyse the feasibility and define their own action plan for the setting up of new regional research-driven clusters;
- Dissemination activities through conferences, workshops, publications, web-based initiatives and any other relevant events or activities including public awareness raising measures, especially among economic actors in their regions.

This Joint Action Plan shall identify the partners involved, objectives, activities (what to do), responsibilities (who does what) and schedule for trans-national (European) and international cooperation.

This action plan shall include clear targets in terms of outputs for the measures it lists.

The Joint Action Plan shall also clearly define how the different measures foreseen will be funded by using possibilities available at national and at local level, including from the private sector, or at Community level (Framework Programmes, Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, Structural Funds). The Action Plan should make clear the complementarities between the proposed actions and the EC regional policy programmes of the regions concerned.

- **Measures towards the implementation of the Joint Action Plan**

The implementation of the Joint Action Plan as regards the trans-national integration of research agendas will **not** be funded by the “Regions of Knowledge” activity per se.

However, the above-mentioned measures relating to mentoring activities, international cooperation activities and dissemination activities will be funded under Regions of Knowledge. Measures to support the implementation of the joint action plan (e.g. through the outplacement of executives of the clusters' boards or management structure, other staff exchange or trust-building activities for members of the clusters, research intelligence, joint trainings, joint recruitment campaigns for research staff, identification and definition of research related projects...) can also be funded⁷.

Proposals should show a balance between the budget devoted to the analysis and definition of the Joint action plan and the one earmarked for the second stage of the project for international cooperation, mentoring activities, dissemination and accompanying measures.

To further support the implementation of the Joint Action Plans in the future, Regions of Knowledge beneficiaries will be expected to take part into the European Club of clusters managers as well as to provide project descriptions and relevant data to be collected in the framework of the European cluster observatory, both set up under Europe INNOVA (<http://www.europe-innova.org>).

Duration:

Projects are expected to be completed normally within 36 months. The definition of the joint action plan is expected to be finalized during the first half of the project's duration.

Funding scheme:

The applied funding scheme is "Coordination and Support Actions" (**Coordinating Action**). The Community contribution to be envisaged for projects will be approximately from EUR 1 to 3 millions.

The Community financial contribution may reach a maximum of 100 % of the total eligible cost.

⁷ Open business partnering event will not be funded under this call, but partners can take advantage of the opportunities offered in that respect under Europe INNOVA (<http://www.europe-innova.org>).

Expected impact:

- Developing and integrating across Europe research-driven clusters in order to promote regional economic development and worldwide competitiveness (increased cost-efficiency, increase in jobs, in FDI, in patents, additional GDP or growth in VA) in a particular scientific and technological domain or economic sector, thereby facilitating in particular the emergence of lead markets;
- Delivering more effective investments in R&D at regional level through the definition and implementation of regional strategies based on business needs, which would mobilize European, national and regional funds and promote synergies notably with the Structural funds and the CIP.
- Including more regions into the Regions of Knowledge initiative, into the knowledge economy and the ERA, especially through the mentoring of regions with a less developed research profile. Where appropriate, delivery of "guidance" solutions for those ones.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF CALL

Call title: Transnational cooperation between regional research-driven clusters

- **Call identifier: FP7-REGIONS-2009-1**
- Date of publication: 3 September 2008⁸
- Deadline: 27 January 2009, at 17.00.00, Brussels local time⁹
- Indicative budget: EUR 16.15 million from 2009 budget¹⁰
- Topics called:

Activity/ Area	Topics called	Funding Schemes
<i>Regions-2009-1. Transnational cooperation <u>between regional research-driven clusters</u></i>	In the 2009 call, proposals should support economic competitiveness and in particular the emergence of lead markets ¹¹ in the following sector: Enhancing the sustainable use of natural resources and of the natural and man-made environment.	<i>CSA-CA (Coordinating Action)</i>

- Eligibility conditions:
 - General eligibility criteria as mentioned in annex 2 will apply.
 - The minimum number of participants: Consortia of partners representing a minimum of three regional research-driven clusters from at least three different European countries. Research-driven clusters must be composed of at least three types of legal entities (so called 'triple helix'), namely:
 - legal entities conducting research (universities, research organisations and research for-profit bodies); national entities conducting research can be accepted if their

⁸ The Directorate-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication

⁹ At the time of the publication of the call, the Director-General responsible may delay this deadline by up to two months.

¹⁰ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2009 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority. The budget for this call is indicative. The final total budget awarded to this call, following the evaluation of proposals, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call.

¹¹ See Commission communication, COM (2007) 860, 21/12/2007.

organisational structure is broken down at regional level and if the regional structure involved is located in the same region than the other components of the cluster; and

- business entities (large enterprises and SMEs as defined in the EC recommendation 2003/361/CE of 6 May 2003, OJ L 124/36, 20/05/2003) and
- regional/local authorities (local and regional government, regional development agencies); national entities can be accepted to represent regional authorities either in small Member States made up of only one NUTS II region, or if their organisational structure is broken down at regional level and their regional representation is located in (or is effectively in charge of) the same region than the other components of the cluster; specialised regional entities, like for example regional energy agencies, can be accepted if they are in charge of the design and/or the implementation of the relevant regional policy.

Where appropriate research-driven clusters may involve as well, on top of the three previous categories, other regional/local entities such as technology transfer offices, science parks, chambers of crafts, commerce and industry, financial entities (such as banks and saving banks) and also management consultants (specialised consultants active in the technological or economic sector concerned can be accepted for representing the business side of the 'triple helix').

A regional research driven cluster as a whole may be represented through one legal entity. If such a legal entity does not exist, a legal arrangement¹² between the members must exist for one member of the cluster to be allowed to legally represent all the others and the envisaged representative must have a clear mandate to represent all other members of the 'research driven cluster'. In cases where no legal entity can represent the cluster as a whole nor a representative can act on behalf of the other members, at least one legal entity conducting research, one business entity and one regional/local authority shall be direct partners of the project consortium.

In any case each member of the cluster directly involved in the project's activities should be clearly identified in the proposal.

- Proposals must be submitted by and the selected projects must be coordinated either by regional research-driven clusters established as a legal entity or by regional/local authorities (or any regional entity they have mandated to implement their economic development and innovation policy) involved in the existing clusters.
- Restrictions on participation: *As described above under 'The minimum number of participants'.*
- The Community contribution to be envisaged for projects will be approximately from EUR 1 to 3 millions.

¹² It can be an existing legal arrangement or a legal arrangement specifically elaborated before the submission of the proposal (or at least before the entry into force of the grant agreement) but its scope can not be limited to the participation and the duration of the project and must cover other activities implemented by the cluster.

- Evaluation procedure:
 - The evaluation criteria (including weights and thresholds) and sub-criteria together with the eligibility, selection and award criteria, for the different funding schemes are set out in Annex 2 to this work programme.
 - The evaluation will follow a single stage procedure.
 - Proposals will not be evaluated anonymously.
 - Proposals may be evaluated remotely.
- Indicative evaluation and contractual timetable: *Evaluation results are estimated to be available within 4 months after the closure date; grant agreement signature: it is estimated that the first grant agreements related to a call will come into force 9 months after the closure date.*
- Consortia agreements: *Participants are encouraged, but not required, to conclude a consortium agreement.*
- The forms of grant and maximum reimbursement rates which will be offered are specified in Annex 3 to the Capacities work programme.

Indicative budget¹³ for the Regions of Knowledge activity for the 2009 Work Programmes

	Indicative budget 2009 ¹⁴
• Call <i>FP7-REGIONS-2008-1</i>	
• Call <i>FP7-REGIONS-2008-2</i>	
• <i>2008 Expert evaluators</i>	
• Call <i>FP7-REGIONS-2009-1</i>	<i>EUR 16.15 million</i>
• <i>2009 Experts evaluators</i>	<i>EUR 0.31 million</i>
INDICATIVE TOTAL BUDGET ALLOCATION	<i>EUR 16.46 million</i>

Budget figures in this work programme

All budgetary figures given in this work programme are indicative. Following the evaluation of proposals the final budget awarded to actions implemented through calls for proposals may vary:

- by up to 10% of the total value of the indicated budget for each call, and
- any repartition of the call budget may also vary by up to 10% of the total value of the indicated budget for the call.

The final budgets for evaluation, monitoring and review may vary by up to 20% of the indicated budgets for these actions. The final budget awarded for all other actions not implemented through calls for proposals may vary by up to 10% of the indicated budgets for these actions.

¹³ Under the condition that the preliminary draft budget for 2009 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority. The budget for the call FP7-REGIONS-2009-1 is indicative: the final total budget awarded to this call, following the evaluation of proposals, may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the call. The final total budget awarded to 2009 Experts evaluators may vary by up to 20%.

¹⁴ A reserve list may be produced of projects that pass the different thresholds of the evaluation but fall below the available indicative budget of a call, in case additional budget becomes available.

IV INDICATIVE PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE CALLS - 2010

In 2010 the projects are expected to address the following areas:

- **Health/ageing (including support to the e-health lead market)**