

CALL FOR PROPOSALS – DG EAC No 26/2007

PILOT PROJECTS FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN EUROPEAN INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

In Europe there are many kinds of collaboration between the actors operating in the knowledge triangle of education, research, and innovation. Usually these take the form of a network in which partners share information and coordinate their activities on an equal basis. While these initiatives have helped create a context in which European organisations and institutes of technology (such as universities, research centres, enterprises and public bodies dealing with innovation) can collaborate more easily, Europe still falls short in turning R&D results into commercial opportunities. To this end, there is growing demand to take these types of collaboration a step further, for example, by creating common governance structures or by sharing resources more effectively. Furthermore, these partnerships are increasingly being requested to focus on knowledge and technology transfer activities, in order to maximise their social and economic impact and their capacity to produce innovation. In this context, the European Parliament has established a budget line (Article 15 02 29) for a pilot project for “cooperation between European Institutes of Technology”¹. On this basis, this call for proposals aims at addressing the demand to increase Europe's technology transfer capacity by means of closer integration of the knowledge triangle.

In particular, this will be achieved by establishing pilot networks that will design, implement and test new models of integrated partnerships between the actors involved in technological innovation and transfer (such as universities, research organisations, small, medium-sized and large companies, innovation centres, etc.). The knowledge and experience therefore produced should not just support these networks in taking their integration a step further, but also provide good practices and support both for existing networks operating in the knowledge triangle and for policy-makers who are designing new instruments and initiatives to support integration.

2. OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

The strategic objective of these pilot projects is to design, implement and test new models of cooperation in the knowledge triangle which aim to become integrated partnerships. The final goal is to facilitate knowledge-sharing and technology transfer by building up the capacity of European networks in strategic interdisciplinary fields to bring their collaboration to a new, more integrated form of partnership. Outputs would include designs for new models of governance for integrated partnerships to overcome the barriers to closer collaboration between the leading players in the knowledge triangle, implementation and testing of some of the critical components identified, plus a set of recommendations and good practices to disseminate and further exploit the results of

¹ Pilot project, as defined by Article 49(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1).

projects. Each proposed partnership should address the above-mentioned goals with a specific focus on one strategic interdisciplinary field that will be used as a case study to test the applicability of the results. Proposals should give reasons for the strategic field which the applicants have chosen to cover in view of its economic and social impact.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications which comply with the following criteria will be subjected to an in-depth evaluation.

3.1. Eligible establishments/bodies/types of beneficiary

- Applications must be submitted by a coordinator of a partnership of at least six independent legal entities (including the coordinator), each of which is established in a Member State and no two of which are established in the same Member State.
- Eligible organisations are universities, research centres, knowledge transfer offices and training centres providing expertise on technology transfer or innovation management-related issues, incubation centres, science parks or the like, companies both large and small and other stakeholders involved in technology and knowledge transfer, including regional development agencies or the like.

To be eligible for a grant, a body must satisfy the following requirements:

- All the applicants must be a public or private independent body with legal status and legal personality;
- Natural persons, that is to say individuals, may not submit applications;
- The applicants must have existed legally for at least two years when the application is submitted;
- The applicants must have their registered office based in one of the EU-27 countries.

The partnerships must:

- include a balanced mix of organisations and expertise for dealing with research, education and innovation in the interdisciplinary field concerned from both the public and private sectors;
- have experience and foundations of cooperation in an interdisciplinary field, with a social and economic impact;
- show that the proposed interdisciplinary field has the value of high inter-linkage between the various components of the knowledge triangle;
- have a track record in networking activities, having been involved in European-level networks such as Networks of Excellence, European Technology Platforms or other EU-funded collaborative programmes. In this sense, at least half the organizations forming the partnership must be part of, or have been involved in, European-level networks dealing with research, education and innovation where partners come from at least six Member States. These networks, even if

temporary, should be or have been officially established (e.g. under a contract or consortium agreement) and envisage performing a shared set of activities;

- have both horizontal competence on issues such as innovation management, entrepreneurship, regional or virtual clusters and knowledge management and vertical competence for application of the findings to a particular interdisciplinary field;
- propose a management structure capable of delivering coordination and integration of the activities performed by the partners;
- propose a set of activities to study new models for integrating the partnership and test the feasibility of these findings along with the capacity to maximise dissemination of the results to other networks;
- have proven capacity to link the European-level dimension with the local and regional impact being involved in local/regional innovation activities;
- include at least one public organisation concerned with innovation and knowledge transfer activities.

3.2. Eligible countries

Only applications from legal entities established in one of the EU Member States are eligible.

4. AWARD CRITERIA

Eligible applications/projects will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria (in parentheses the weight that is given to each criterion):

- Content (30%)
 - The quality of the proposal in terms of objectives, relevance, activities, and deliverables.
- Partnership (30%)
 - The quality of the scientific, educational and innovation competence of the partners in the proposed interdisciplinary field and in the field of innovation management.
 - Quality and extensiveness of the networking experience of the participants.
 - Quality of the partnership in terms of European impact, technology and knowledge transfer capacity and commitment to deep, sustainable and durable integration.
- Management (20%)
 - Appropriateness of the management structure.
 - Adequacy of resources for successfully carrying out the proposed activities.
 - Capacity to attract and mobilize additional resources to Community funding, both at the start of the project or during its lifetime, in particular from the private sector.
- Impact (20%)
 - European-level impact of the results and dissemination activities.
 - Capacity to implement the results via other initiatives and adequacy of an exit strategy.

5. BUDGET

The total budget earmarked for the cofinancing of projects amounts to 5 million Euros. Financial assistance from the Commission cannot exceed 75% of the total eligible costs. Each grant will amount to between 0.5 and 1.5 million Euros. The maximum grant will be 1.5 million Euros.

Given the budget of €5 million, it is estimated that three to five partnerships could be financed.

6. TIMETABLE

Applications must reach the Commission no later than 15 August 2007.

Activities must start before 30 December 2007 and end before 31 December 2009. The maximum duration of projects is 24 months. No applications will be accepted for projects scheduled to run for a longer period than that specified in this call for proposals. No extensions to the eligibility period beyond the maximum duration will be granted. The intention is to inform applicants of the outcome of the selection procedure no later than October 2007.

It is planned that beneficiaries will receive their agreements for signing by November 2007. The period of eligibility of costs will start on the day the contract is signed by the last of the parties. If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, expenditure may be authorised before the agreement is signed. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the application for a grant.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

The full text of the call for proposals and the application forms are available on the following website: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/calls/grants_en.html. Applications must comply with the requirements set out in the full text and be submitted using the form provided.

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