

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

EUROCORES Project Selection Phase: *Outline- and Full-Proposals submission and selection*

Last update: 25 January 2010

The following series of Frequently Asked Questions and answers are grouped under three main categories of General, Outline Proposals and Full Proposals as pertinent to the main stages of the EUROCORES Project selection. You may consult FAQ documents relevant to the Theme selection, Glossary on the EUROCORES Website for additional information (www.esf.org/eurocores). For programme-specific questions you may contact the designated EUROCORES Programme Coordinator whose name and E-mail addresses are provided on the back of the call for proposals.

GENERAL:

Is ESF a European funding agency?

No, ESF coordinates and facilitates cooperation and collaboration in European science on behalf of its principal stakeholders (Member Organisations and Europe's scientific community). ESF does not provide research funding; these are supplied by the participating Member Organisations at various programmes.

Within the EUROCORES Scheme, what is the relationship between the ESF and the European National funding organisations?

The ESF is running the EUROCORES Programmes on behalf of all the participating national funding organisations.

Are EUROCORES Outline Proposals similar to EU Framework Programme 7 applications?

No, these are different programmes. The EUROCORES Scheme is designed by the ESF and its Member Organisations (the national funding organisations) to address specific needs of the scientific community.

Do I need to have an agreement with my national funding organisation before I can submit a EUROCORES Collaborative Research proposal?

All your partners in a Collaborative Research Project (CRP) should confirm their eligibility and the eligibility of their requested funding with their national funding organisations before submitting a CRP proposal. You will find the contact details for the participating national funding organisations in the back of the Call for proposals. The national contacts might also give you more information about the potential national budget available, the eligibility of single budget items and other issues.

In addition to the proposal we submit to the ESF, do we have to submit a separate proposal to our national funding organisations?

This depends on your national regulations set by your funding organisations. ESF does not have such a requirement. The only condition is that all the participants requesting funding should be eligible to receive funding from their funding organisations **participating in the programme**.

Can I participate in a EUROCORES Programme without requesting national funding?

Yes you can participate as an Associated Partner (AP) in a Collaborative Research Project (CRP), this is in contrast to the Principal Investigators (PIs) who are eligible for, and will receive, national research grants. As an AP your research contributions to the host consortium and all your travel and networking costs will have to be covered by your own means.

OUTLINE PROPOSALS:

What are EUROCORES Outline Proposals?

The project selection phase of the EUROCORES Programmes consists of two stages: i) The preliminary step of submission and selection of Outline Proposals, and ii) the final step for Full Proposals submission and selection. Applicants of the successful Outline Proposals are invited to submit Full Proposals. Outline Proposals provide the general ideas for a collaborative research project by specifying the scope of the CRP, the teaming arrangement that includes at least three Principal Investigators (PIs) from three different participating countries. The OPs also outline the contribution of each of the IPs and contain an indication of the requested budget and the main deliverables of the project. Further details can be found on the call for proposals for each programme.

Who can submit an outline proposal?

Every group of at least three researchers who are eligible for funding by their participating national funding or research performing organisations can submit an outline proposal.

For a list of the organisations participating in a given programme please refer to the last page of the Call for proposals for that programme.

Can a PI participate in more than one proposal? Is there a limit on this? You must verify this with your national funding organisation. The same work packages should not be included in more than one proposal. If a PI contributes to more than one proposal but with different work packages, achievement of the overall contributions should stay within reasonable limits of normal work load.

Are “junior scientists” also allowed to submit a proposal?

Yes they are provided that their track record is convincing to the Review Panel in light of the assessment criteria on “qualifications of the applicants”. That is, you should demonstrate that you have sufficient scientific background and track record to know the latest development of the field, and to have the capacity to address the topic effectively. Also you should be able to identify the most appropriate persons to be involved in such a programme at the European level. For questions on eligibility, please also contact your national funding organisation listed in the Call for proposals of your programme.

Can I contact the members of the Review Panel of the EUROCORES Programme to discuss my proposal?

No, you should not try to contact any of the members of the Review Panel to discuss your project proposal at any stage of the selection and ranking processes. The ESF publicises the membership of the Review Panel solely in the interest of transparency. All communications concerning the Review Process should only be passed through the ESF office.

How many partners can be included in an outline proposal?

There have to be at least three partners (Principal Investigators) from three different countries in a proposal. In general there is no maximum number of Principal Investigators (PI). The number of PIs should be adequate to cover the scope and focus of the research being proposed and can thus vary from project to project. Experience with past competitions show, that the average number of partners in a proposal is between three and six. The ESF office recommends not having more than eight partners. If you have more than 6 partners, the ESF recommends that you provide a detailed rationale describing the necessity of the proposed makeup and explain the cohesion and management of the different IPs and APs within the project.

How many Individual Projects (IPs) from one country can be part of a proposal?

To ensure that EUROCORES Collaborative Research Projects (CRPs) are benefiting from international collaboration, only a maximum of 50 % of the Individual Projects (IPs) in a CRP can be from one country (e.g. in a CRP with 6 IPs, 3 IPs from one country are accepted).

How many PIs can be in one Individual Project (IP)?

There can only be one Principal Investigator (PI) in an IP.

Is there the possibility that another funding organisation signs up after the Call for Outline proposals has been published or can PIs from that country only participate as Associated Partners?

Sometimes, national funding organisations, due to their internal process, are not able to inform the ESF about their participation on time. Therefore, scientists from countries not listed in the Calls for proposals are invited to check the ESF programme website where all amendments to the call for proposals are listed.

Scientists seeking funding from national organisations not participating in the EUROCORES Programme can only participate as associated partners.

Review Process:

How does the review process work?

For details, please refer to the guidelines for outline proposals, the EUROCORES poster and other EUROCORES documents on the EUROCORES web-site at: www.esf.org/eurocores. In summary, outline proposals are assessed by an international Review Panel designated to the programme. The members of this Panel are nominated by the participating funding organisations and the ESF office and are endorsed by the ESF's Science Advisory Board. The Panel members review the proposals and discuss them at a review panel meeting called the "sifting meeting". The selection process is in accordance to the specific criteria set out in the EUROCORES Scheme and described in the individual call for proposals.

What are the ESF assessment criteria?

At the **outline stage** the selection criteria are:

- Potential for scientific excellence, including
 - Relevance to the Call for proposals
 - Originality/Novelty
 - European added value
 - Qualifications of the applicants

How long is the selection process?

For a given launched EUROCORES programme, the Call for outline Proposals (OP) is announced in late December with a submission deadline in early March. Full Proposals (FP) are then invited from the selected OPs by Mid-April with a submission deadline in June. The FP selection and ranking will occur in October and the funding organisation decisions are expected to be announced sometimes during December – March the following year.

Funding:**If a National Funding Organisation is participating in a Programme, does it mean they would fund all the IPs recommended for funding from that organisation?**

Unfortunately this is not the case. Depending on the amount of funds available and the number of proposals recommended for funding on the rank ordered list, not all IPs will end up being funded.

What currency should I use when describing the budgets?

You should use Euros.

When the project has been recommended for funding but one EUROCORES Funding Organisation (EFO) declines funding of an IP, what happens to the CRP?

The funding of the EUROCORES Collaborative Research Project is a complex process. If only one EFO does not fund an IP within a CRP that was recommended for funding then the CRP proposal partners (assuming that they still fulfil the criteria of 3 PIs from 3 countries) will be asked to give a statement explaining if and how they would be able to conduct the planned research without the IP which is not being funded. This statement/explanation will be given to the EUROCORES Programme Review Panel to reassess the proposal. The Review Panel will be asked to especially assess the viability of the CRP in light of the lack of funding for the IP in question. If the reassessment is positive this information will be given to the remaining EFOs which will then take their decision on funding of the remaining IPs. If there are serious doubts about the viability of the CRP proposal it will not be recommended for funding. If more than one IP are not funded, the complete CRP will not be funded.

Who will finally be funding my research project?

The funding for the actual research work within an Individual Project and the networking within the CRPs of a EUROCORES Programme is provided by the national funding or research performing organisations that participate in the EUROCORES Programme (e.g. CNRS, DFG). The funding for networking between the CRPs at the level of the EUROCORES Programme is covered, for each programme, by dedicated contributions from participating Organisations. The basis for these contributions is the number of individual projects supported by each Funding Organisation.

When will my project actually be funded?

For the Calls for outline proposals (projects) published in December 2008, funding of selected projects should start around March June 2010.

Does the ESF take the financial responsibility in case earlier commitments by national funding organisations are not met?

No, the ESF does not take financial responsibility for any commitment by the national funding organisations. The ESF is running the EUROCORES Scheme on behalf of the national funding organisations, so the financial responsibilities remain with the national funding organisations.

FULL PROPOSALS:

What are EUROCORES Full Proposals?

The project selection phase of the EUROCORES Programmes consists of two stages: i) The preliminary step of submission and selection of Outline Proposals, and ii) the final step for Full Proposals submission and selection. Applicants of the successful Outline Proposals are invited to submit Full Proposals. Full Proposals are collaborative research proposals on the given thematic research area of the programme. Each proposal should include at least 3 research teams from the participating countries. The Principal Investigators responsible for each of the teams should be eligible for funding in accordance with their national funding organisations regulations. The Full Proposals will be peer reviewed and assessed by an international Peer Review dedicated to each EUROCORES programme. The Review Panel will recommend to the participating funding organisations a rank-ordered list of proposals to be funded. Depending on the amount of funding available in the programme, it may happen that only a subset of the recommended proposals will be funded.

Are EUROCORES Full Proposals similar to EU Framework Programme 7 applications?

No, these are different programmes. The EUROCORES Scheme is designed by the ESF and its Member Organisations (the national funding organisations) to address specific needs of the scientific community.

Do the partners in a full proposal need to be the same as in the outline proposal?

No, from the outline to the full proposal stage you can change some of the partners including the Project Leader, if necessary. The content and focus of the selected outline proposal and the submitted full proposal should essentially be the same.

Also, **YOU MUST** make sure that your new partner(s) in a CRP is/are eligible for funding from his/her national funding organisation. The ESF will also check the eligibility of all partners of your proposal with the national funding organisations at the full proposals stage again.

If your new partner is not eligible for funding from his/her own funding organisation, you run the risk that the complete CRP will fail to be funded, even though your proposal might have been recommended for funding.

Can I submit a full proposal if I have not submitted an outline proposal?

No, if you did not submit an outline proposal you cannot submit a full proposal.

Can I submit a full proposal if my outline proposal was not successful and I was not invited to submit a full proposal?

If your outline proposal was not selected by the Review Panel, you will not be invited by the ESF to submit a full proposal. The outline stage of the EUROCORES submission process is designed to reduce the effort on the part of the applicants by pre-selecting proposals that would have a higher chance of being funded in the second round. However, if you have participated at the outline stage you may choose to submit a full proposal, in spite of the fact that you have not been invited to submit one. It needs to be noted that the same Review Panel who made the selection at the outline proposal stage will be responsible for the selection and ranking of the full proposals. Under the latter circumstance, to be able to submit a full proposal, you need to contact the ESF office so that you can get access to the full proposal submission form and guidelines.

Can you provide examples of successful applications previously submitted under EUROCORES Programme Calls?

No, since the proposals are property of the applicants the ESF cannot provide any example of a successful application.

Can a PI participate in more than one full proposal? Is there a limit on this? You must verify this with your national funding organisation. The same work packages should not be included in more than one CRP. If a PI contributes to more than one CRP but with different work packages, achievement of the overall contributions should stay within reasonable limits of normal work load.

Are “junior scientists” also allowed to submit a proposal?

Yes they are, provided that their track record is convincing to the Review Panel in light of the assessment criteria on “qualifications of the applicants”. That is, you should demonstrate that you have sufficient scientific background and track record to know the latest development of the field, and to have the capacity to address the topic effectively. Also you should be able to identify the most appropriate persons to be involved in such a programme at the European level. For questions on eligibility, please also contact your national funding organisation listed in the Call for proposals of your programme.

Signature sheet:

Do all signatures have to be on the same sheet?

No. The signatures can be on individual sheets as long as these are stapled together. Digitized signatures will be accepted (i.e a computer file that includes the scanned image of the signature)

Proposal partners:

Who can submit a Full Proposal?

If your Outline Proposal has been successful, you will be invited to submit a full proposal based on your OP. An applicant of a Full Proposal must also be eligible for funding from one of the participating funding agencies in the given EUROCORES Programme. Therefore, it is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that his/her funding agency or research performing organisation is participating in the programme and that he/she is eligible for funding in that organisation.

How many partners can be included in a EUROCORES Collaborative Research Project (CRP) proposal?

There have to be at least three partners (Principal Investigators) from three different countries in a CRP proposal. In general there is no maximum number of Principal Investigators (PI). The number of PIs should be adequate to cover the scope and focus of the research being proposed and can thus vary from project to project. Experience with past competitions show, that the average number of partners in a CRP is between three and six. The ESF office recommends not having more than eight partners. If you have more than 6 partners, the ESF recommends that you provide a detailed rationale describing the necessity of the proposed makeup and explain the cohesion and management of the different IPs and APs within the CRP.

How many Individual Projects (IPs) from one country can be part of a CRP?

To ensure that EUROCORES Collaborative Research Project (CRPs) are benefiting from international collaboration, only a maximum of 50 % of the number of Individual Projects (IPs) in a CRP can be from one country (e.g. in a CRP with 6 IPs, 3 IPs from one country are accepted).

How many PIs can be in one Individual Project (IP)?

There can only be one Principal Investigator (PI) in an IP.

Funding:

If a National Funding Organisation is participating in a Programme, does it mean they would fund all the IPs recommended for funding from that organization?

Unfortunately this is not the case. Depending on the amount of funds available and the number of proposals recommended for funding on the rank ordered list, not all IPs will end up being funded.

What currency should I use when describing the budgets?

You should use Euros for the overall part (Section A) and each Individual Projects parts (Section B). In addition you should use in section B the currency of the country of the funding organisation approached (if it different from Euros). Please use the exchange rate valid on the date of submission of your proposal.

Why do I have to give my account number?

Please note that you should under no circumstances give your private account number but the account number of your institute. If this is not current practice when you apply for other funding from your national organisation, then it is not mandatory to give your account number at this stage.

What kind of networking funding do I have to apply for and in which part of the proposal?

Each PI or AP has to apply for his/her own networking funds for the networking costs incurred within their CRP (i.e., travel and exchanges with the CRP partners). This should be done in for each IP/AP separately.

The ESF will support networking activities across CRPs using dedicated contributions of the National Funding Organisations for that purpose.

Where do I have to apply for travel?

This depends on the nature of the travel: If you want to apply for "individual" travel funds to attend international conferences etc. you should apply within your IP. This is the same if you need travel funds to visit your CRP partner or to have inter-CRP meetings. Also, when you plan field-trips, sites, etc, this needs to be applied for within the IP.

Once the EUROCORES Programme is running, the ESF will start the networking of all funded CRPs. These networking activities normally involve conferences for the whole Programme as well as workshops and working group meetings that involve several--but not necessarily all--CRPs. These events can also be linked to international conferences.

When the project has been recommended for funding but one EFO declines funding of an IP, what happens to the CRP?

The funding of the EUROCORES Collaborative Research Project is a complex process. If only one EFO does not fund an IP within a CRP that was recommended for funding then the CRP proposal partners (assuming that they still fulfil the criteria of 3 PIs from 3 countries) will be asked to give a statement explaining if and how they would be able to conduct the planned research without the IP which is not being funded. This statement/explanation will be given to the EUROCORES Programme Review Panel to reassess the proposal. The Review Panel will be asked to especially assess the viability of the CRP in light of the lack of funding for the IP in question. If the reassessment is positive this information will be given to the remaining EFOs which will then take their decision on funding of the remaining IPs. If there are serious doubts about the viability of the CRP proposal it will not be recommended for funding. If more than one IP are not funded, the complete CRP will not be funded.

Who will finally be funding my research project?

The funding for the actual research work within an Individual Project and the networking within the CRPs of a EUROCORES Programme is provided by the national funding or research performing organisations that participate in the EUROCORES Programme (e.g. CNRS, DFG).

The funding for networking between the CRPs at the level of the EUROCORES Programme is covered, for each programme, by dedicated contributions from participating organisations. The basis for these contributions is the number of individual projects supported by each Funding Organisation).

When will my project actually be funded?

For the Calls for outline proposals (projects) published in December 2008, funding of selected projects should start around March/June 2010.

Does the ESF take the financial responsibility in case earlier commitments by national funding organisations are not met?

No, the ESF does not take financial responsibility for any commitment by the national funding organisations. The ESF is running the EUROCORES Scheme on behalf of the national funding organisations, so the financial responsibilities for funding remain with the national funding organisations.

To what level do I have to justify my budget request?

You should provide a sound scientific justification for any resources you are requesting including staff, equipment, consumables and travel costs. Especially if you are requesting "post-doc" positions, your justifications should be compelling and carefully argued. The Review Panel will be asked to assess the necessity of the level of requested staff according to the justifications provided.

The Proposal:**How long can the full proposals be?**

Please note that there is a page limit for each part of the application, and the total length of the application depends on the number of IPs in your proposal.

However, the ESF advises you to keep your proposal as short as possible and not to use more pages than advised in the application form. As you may appreciate, generally speaking the referees would much prefer to find the necessary information of the proposal in the least number of pages possible.

Starting dates: only one starting date or multiple possible?

For each Individual project there can be different starting dates depending on the proposed starting dates of each IP and as agreed with the national funding organisations.

How can other existing programmes be included in the CRP proposal (e.g. links with national or international Programme)?

It depends how you want to link to existing programmes (national or International): You have the possibility to make members of such programmes partners in your proposal, either as Principal Investigators or as Associated partners (see also questions about project partners, the full proposal application guidelines and the EUROCORES glossary for this).

You could also foresee if their involvement would benefit more than one CRP, in which case you could involve them in the networking of the EUROCORES Programme or as cooperating partners once the EUROCORES Programme is running. In these latter cases these participants from outside of the programmes will have to cover their own costs for the participation in the EUROCORES networking activities.

Can a scientist sub-contract a specific task as part of their EUROCORES proposals, or does all the work have to be done by the PI (or Project member)?

This depends on the rules of the national organisations from which the PI is requesting funding.

Can it be assumed that all partners in the different countries of a CRP will be able to start their IP at the same time?

From the experience of past EUROCORES Programmes the starting dates of IPs within a CRP vary from 3 months to more than 12 months. Since the starting dates depend on the funding procedures in the national funding organisations it is not likely that all IPs would start at the same. The ESF is increasing its efforts to harmonise the starting dates of CRPs in future EUROCORES Programmes.

If one of the project deliverables is a technology or system that has been funded by several organisations, does the ESF provide a guideline or recommendations on how to deal with the property rights associated with such co-funded deliverables (i.e., who should own which part of the deliverables, once the project is completed)?

The ESF recommends that the scientists involved in the project and the funding organisations supporting it, should discuss and draw up an intellectual property agreement for such co-funded technology at an early stage. The same is true for any projects with deliverables that might hold other kinds of Intellectual Property Rights or Patents.

Review Process:

How does the review process work?

For details, please refer the guidelines for full proposals, the EUROCORES poster and other EUROCORES documents on the EUROCORES web-site at: www.esf.org/eurocores

In summary, full proposals are assessed, selected and ranked in two stages; First, a minimum of 3 international referees provide written assessments on each of the proposals in accordance to the assessment criteria set out in the EUROCORES Scheme and described in the individual call for proposals. Following the peer review assessments, the applicants of the proposals will be given the opportunity of responding to the comments of the external referees. Finally, the Review Panel will meet in a “ranking meeting” to deliberate on the ranking of the proposals. The basis of the deliberations of the panel will be the referee assessments, the applicants’ responses, and the comments of the rapporteurs of the review panel assigned to each proposals.

What are the ESF assessment criteria?

At the **outline stage** the selection criteria are:

- Potential for scientific excellence, including
 - Relevance to the Call for proposals
 - Originality/Novelty
 - European added value
 - Qualifications of the applicants

At the **full proposal** stage the main criterion is Scientific Quality.

In addition, the following criteria might also be considered:

- Interdisciplinary
- Qualification of the applicants
- Level of collaboration and integration (including added value)
- Feasibility
- Overlap to already ongoing/funded projects
- Suitability of requested budget
- Possible additional criteria (as published in the Call for proposals)

Can I contact the members of the Review Panel of the EUROCORES Programme to discuss my proposal?

No, you should not try to contact any of the members of the Review Panel to discuss your project proposal at any stage of the selection and ranking processes. The ESF publicises the membership of the Review Panel solely in the interest of transparency. All communications concerning the Review Process should only be passed through the ESF office.

Once a full proposal is granted funding, is there any evaluation of the progress of the project?

Yes, the ESF is managing an evaluation process on the Programme level on behalf of the participating funding organisations. After about 1-2 years into the running of the projects, "mid-term reports" at the CRP and Programme level will be requested. These reports will be evaluated by members of the EUROCORES Programme Review Panel and possibly additional experts. The Review Panel might also provide general guidance to the CRPs and the Programme as a whole.

How long is the selection process?

For a given launched EUROCORES programme, the Call for outline Proposals (OP) is announced in late December with a submission deadline in early March. Full Proposals (FP) are then invited from the selected OPs by mid-April with a submission deadline in June. The FP selection and ranking will occur in October and the funding organisation decisions are expected to be announced sometimes during December to March the following year.

Special questions concerning national requirements:

Please also consult the document on special national requirements which is available on the EUROCORES Programme website.

For details, please contact your national funding organisation representative. The names and contact details are given in the back of the Call for proposals

New partners from other countries:

If you are a new partner to a CRP, **YOU MUST** make sure that you are eligible for funding from your national funding organisation. The ESF **WILL** check eligibility of your proposal with the national funding organisations.

If you do not check for eligibility from your own national funding organisation, you run the risk of being not eligible for funding and that therefore, the complete CRP will fail to be funded, even though your proposal might have been recommended for funding (see above).

Please note that this document will be up-dated regularly. If your question is not answered here, please contact the ESF office at eurocores@esf.org.