



# network

## enterprise europe



## Setting a new standard in European research and Innovation

The Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (FP7) is the European Union's main instrument for funding research in Europe. FP7, which applies to the years 2007-2013.

Since their launch in 1984, the Framework Programmes have played a lead role in multi-disciplinary research and cooperative activities in Europe and beyond.

The programme has a budget of 53.2 billion euros over its seven-year lifespan, the largest funding allocation yet for such programmes.



## FP7 – Outline of the programme

The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) includes several specific programmes:

- Cooperation – fostering collaboration between industry and academia to gain leadership in key technology areas.
- Ideas – supporting basic research at the scientific frontiers (implemented by the European Research Council).
- People – supporting mobility and career development for researchers both within and outside Europe.
- Capacities – helping develop the capacities that Europe needs to be a thriving knowledge-based economy.
- Nuclear research (Euratom programme) – developing Europe’s nuclear fission and fusion capabilities.

## Who can participate in the FP7 Programme?

Participation in the Seventh Framework Programme is open to a wide range of organisations and individuals. Universities, research centres, multinational corporations, SMEs (small to medium-sized enterprises), public administrations, even individuals, from anywhere in the world – all have the opportunity to participate in FP7.

Different participation rules apply depending on the research initiative in question.

### How do you begin?

1. You have an idea or vision for a research project.
2. Consult the rules for FP7 research.
3. Seek out other EU partners or participants from abroad who share your vision and with which you can cooperate.
4. Submit your application to the European Commission, according to the Call for Proposal deadlines and dedicated work programme.
5. The European Commission guarantees proper evaluation of your submission by 3-7 independent evaluators, who are experts in that field.
6. The Commission will notify you of the evaluation results. If they are positive, contract negotiations will begin.
7. Contract signature and start of the project.

## What's new in FP7?

FP7 has some key differences to earlier EU research programmes, including an increased budget, which means additional resources for European research. It is also a strong political message to the EU Member States, which have committed themselves to increase research spending from 2% of GDP currently to 3% in 2010.

A strong focus on **major research themes** (e.g. health, ICTs, space, etc.) within the largest component of FP7 – Cooperation – makes the programme more flexible and responsive to the needs of industry.

The first pan-European agency for funding research, the newly created **European Research Council**, aims to fund more high-risk yet potentially high-gain European research at the scientific frontiers.

FP7 is establishing new **Regions of Knowledge** that bring together the various research partners within a region. Universities, research centres, multinational firms, regional authorities and SMEs can all link up and strengthen their research abilities and potential.

A new **Risk-sharing finance facility** is to enhance backing for private investors in research projects, improving access to loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) for large European research actions.

**Joint Technology Initiatives** (JTIs) are a user-driven follow-up to the European Technology Platforms (ETPs), the JTIs are a new concept that brings together different partners to take on objectives that cannot be reached via the 'Calls for Proposals' approach. JTIs specifically address those areas of research activity where enhanced collaboration and considerable investment are essential to long-term success.

A single Helpdesk, the '**Research Enquiries service**', acts as the first point of contact for potential participants, answering questions on all aspects of EU-funded research and assisting parties new to participation in the Framework research programmes.

See [www.ec.europa.eu/research/enquiries](http://www.ec.europa.eu/research/enquiries)

## FP7 – the priorities

The priorities in FP7 are contained within several specific programmes, as follows:

### Cooperation programme – the core of FP7

The core of FP7 and its largest component by far, the Cooperation programme fosters collaborative research across Europe and other partner countries, according to several key thematic areas. These themes are: health; food, agriculture and fisheries, and biotechnology; information and communications technologies; nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies; energy; environment (including climate change); transport (including aeronautics); socio-economic sciences and the humanities; space and security.

This programme also includes the new Joint Technology Initiatives, which are industry-driven, large-scale multi-financed actions, supported in certain cases by a mix of public and private funding. Other highlights of this programme include Coordination of non-community research programmes, which aims to bring European national and regional research programmes closer together (e.g. ERA-NET), and the Risk-sharing finance facility.

Special attention is also being paid to multi-disciplinary and cross-theme research, including joint calls for proposals between themes.

### Ideas programme – and the European Research Council (ERC)

The Ideas programme is the first time an EU Framework research programme has funded pure, investigative research at the frontiers of science and technology, independently of thematic priorities. As well as bringing such research closer to the conceptual source, this flagship FP7 programme is recognition of the value of basic research to society's economic and social welfare.

The Ideas programme is uniquely flexible in its approach to EU research, in that proposed research projects are judged solely on the basis of their excellence, as judged by peer review. It is being implemented by the new European Research Council (ERC), which consists of Scientific Council (to plan scientific strategy, establish the work programme, quality control and information activities) and an implementing agency (administration, support for applicants, proposal eligibility, grant management and practical organisation).

Research may be carried out in any area of science or technology, including engineering, socio-economic sciences and the humanities. Particular emphases are being placed on emerging and fast-growing fields at the frontiers of knowledge, and on cross-disciplinary research. Unlike the Cooperation programme, there is no obligation for cross-border partnerships.

## People programme – boosting European research careers

The People programme provides significant support for research mobility and career development, both for researchers inside the European Union and externally. It is being implemented via a coherent set of Marie Curie actions, designed to help researchers build their skills and competences throughout their careers.

The programme includes activities such as initial researcher training, support for lifelong training and development via trans-national European fellowships and other actions, and industry/academia partnerships. An international dimension with partners outside the EU is to further develop the careers of EU researchers, by creating international outgoing and incoming fellowships to foster collaboration with research groups outside Europe.

## Capacities programme – building the knowledge economy

The Capacities programme is designed to help strengthen and optimise the knowledge capacities that Europe needs if it is to become a thriving knowledge-based economy. By strengthening research abilities, innovation capacity and European competitiveness, the programme is stimulating Europe's full research potential and knowledge resources.

The programme embraces six specific knowledge areas, including Research Infra-structures, Research for the benefit of SMEs, Regions of Knowledge, Research Potential, Science in Society and International Cooperation activities.

## Nuclear research

This specific programme comprises two parts – the first part focusing on nuclear fusion and the international ITER research facility, which is to be constructed in Europe. The objectives are to develop the knowledge base on nuclear fusion, and to realise the experimental ITER fusion reactor. ITER is set to be the biggest research project on Earth.

The second part of the programme covers nuclear safety, waste management for nuclear fission facilities, and radiation protection. The Joint Research Centre's activities in this area include developing a European-level view on management and disposal of radioactive waste, maintaining safe operation of nuclear facilities, and supporting further research into nuclear power. For more information on these and more JRC activities, see [www.jrc.ec.europa.eu](http://www.jrc.ec.europa.eu)

For more information on the content outlined within this fact sheet visit [www.cordis.europa.eu/](http://www.cordis.europa.eu/)

## Useful Contacts & Information Resources

### Midlands Enterprise Europe Network

The TechnoCentre  
Puma Way  
Coventry  
CV1 2TT



Contact: Estelle Colmerauer or Alex Mauser  
Telephone: 02476 236236  
Email: [mirco@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:mirco@coventry.ac.uk)

### Advantage West Midlands

FP7 & CIP

Contact: Jitka Dolezalova  
Telephone: 0121 503 36 40  
Email: [jitkadolezalova@advantagewm.co.uk](mailto:jitkadolezalova@advantagewm.co.uk)

### European Commission FP7 site

<http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/>

### Official National Contact Point PF7 UK

[www.fp7uk.co.uk](http://www.fp7uk.co.uk)

### UK Technology Strategy Board

[www.innovateuk.org/](http://www.innovateuk.org/)