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Community Research

FP6 Instruments

Implementing the priority
thematic areas of the Sixth
Framework Programme



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Introduction

The purpose of this brochure is to provide an introduction to the instruments available for implementing the priority thematic areas of the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6), the European Union's four-year research and development programme due to start at the end of 2002.

"The Sixth Framework Programme should have a structuring effect on research and technological development in Europe, including the Member States, Associated candidate countries and other Associated countries and make a significant contribution to the establishment of the European Research Area and to Innovation." (Cited from the European Parliament and Council decision on FP6)

A wider range of better differentiated instruments

A wider range of much **better differentiated** instruments are available for implementing the priority thematic areas of FP6 than for the key actions of the Fifth Framework Programme (FP5). The introduction of two **new instruments**, the 'integrated projects' and 'networks of excellence', and the new emphasis given to a third, 'Article 169', is motivated by the concepts underpinning the European Research Area. The more 'traditional' instruments, such as 'specific targeted research projects', will remain, thus providing an element of continuity between Framework Programmes.

The creation of the European Research Area is central to the endeavour launched in March 2000 at the European Council in Lisbon to transform Europe into the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy by the year 2010.

Fast facts I – Instruments for implementing the FP6 priority thematic areas

New Instruments	Traditional Instruments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated projects (IP) • Networks of excellence (NoE) • Article 169* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific targeted research projects • Co-ordination actions • Specific support actions

*Strictly speaking, this is not a new instrument, but it has taken on new importance in FP6.

A key feature of the new instruments is their ability to mobilise the critical mass of expertise needed to achieve ambitious objectives with a European dimension, while having a structuring and integrating effect on the fabric of European research.

Role and scope of the brochure

Intended as a source of information and assistance to a variety of interested parties, especially potential FP6 participants, this brochure only focuses on the use of these instruments in the context of the priority thematic areas, although they are likely to play a role elsewhere in the Framework Programme, along with additional instruments available for implementing other parts of FP6.

The content of this brochure is largely based on more detailed 'working documents' on the instruments produced by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research (as available at the time of writing, early October 2002), which can be downloaded at the following website:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/networks-ip.html>

Readers are advised to refer back to these documents for regular updates and new developments on how the instruments will be implemented, with the basic principles being spelled out in the official documents for FP6, which can be downloaded at the following website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/documents_en.html

While every effort has been made to ensure this brochure is an accurate and practical introduction to the FP6 instruments, neither the European Commission nor any person acting on its behalf is responsible for the use which might be made of the information.

Guiding principles of the FP6 Instruments

Before examining each of these instruments in turn, it is worth recalling the principles which guided their design.

Fast facts 2 – Five guiding principles behind the FP6 instruments

1. Simplification and streamlining to minimise overheads and speed up procedures
2. Increased legal and financial security
3. Flexibility and adaptability to fit widely different research areas and to accommodate changes in circumstances in the course of the work
4. Increased management autonomy for consortia
5. Emphasis on preserving public accountability

Classification and priorities of the Instruments

Calls for proposals for each priority theme will identify which instruments are to be used, which have priority and for what. From the outset, IPs and NoE will be used as the priority means for implementing those themes where it is already deemed appropriate. In 2004, the Commission will organise an independent evaluation of the use of all the instruments, which could lead to an adjustment in their relative weightings.

The classification scheme below shows the range of well-differentiated instruments available within FP6.

INTEGRATED PROJECTS

Purpose – to support objective-driven research necessary to generate the knowledge needed for implementing the priority thematic areas

Primary deliverable – new knowledge

Other deliverables – as they mobilise a critical mass of expertise, IPs should also have a structuring effect on the European research fabric

Scale of effort – medium to high

Community contribution – from several millions to several tens of millions of euro

Financial regime – ‘grant to the budget’ paid as a contribution to actual costs

NETWORKS OF EXCELLENCE

Purpose – to address fragmentation of European research

Primary deliverable – the structuring and shaping of European research on a particular topic to strengthen excellence there

Other deliverables – as they support the work of excellent research teams, NoE will also generate new knowledge

Scale of effort – medium to high

Community contribution – from several millions to some tens of millions of euro

Financial regime – a fixed grant for integration, disbursed in annual instalments on the basis of progress towards achieving lasting integration

ARTICLE 169

Purpose – to support research programmes undertaken jointly by several Member States and Associated States

Scale of effort – high (the use of Article 169 will only be for large-scale initiatives beyond the scope of IPs and NoE)

Community contribution – from some tens of millions of euro upwards

SPECIFIC TARGETED RESEARCH PROJECTS

Purpose – to support RTD and demonstration activities of a more limited scope and ambition than the IPs

Deliverables – new knowledge

Scale of effort – low to medium

Community contribution – from several hundred thousand to a few million euro

Financial regime – ‘grant to the budget’ paid as a contribution to actual costs

SPECIFIC SUPPORT ACTIONS

Purpose – to support the implementation of the Framework Programme

Community contribution – up to several hundred thousand euro (in rare cases, millions)

Financial regime – ‘grant to the budget’ paid as a contribution to actual costs, or (if necessary) as a lump sum

CO-ORDINATION ACTIONS

Purpose – to promote and support the networking and co-ordination of research and innovation activities

Community contribution – up to several hundred thousand euro (in rare cases, millions)

Financial regime – ‘grant to the budget’ paid as a contribution to actual costs

Integrated Projects

The integrated projects instrument is designed to **generate the knowledge** required to implement the priority thematic areas. It will do that by integrating the **critical mass** of activities and resources needed to achieve **ambitious, clearly-defined scientific and technological objectives** of a European dimension.

Fast facts 3 – IP objectives

An integrated project is an instrument supporting **objective-driven research** of European dimension where the primary deliverable is **new knowledge**. And, by mobilising a critical mass of resources, integrated projects should also have a structuring effect on European research.

Activities

The activities carried out as part of the ‘implementation plan’ of an IP should include research and, as appropriate, technological development and/or demonstration activities, activities for the management and use of knowledge in order to promote innovation, and any other type of activity directly related to the IP’s objectives (including training). These activities should all be integrated within a coherent management framework.

An IP may span large parts of the spectrum from basic to applied research. Most projects are expected to be multidisciplinary in nature.

Scale of critical mass and duration

Each IP must assemble the critical mass of **activities, expertise and resources** needed to achieve its ambitious objectives. However, critical mass could differ widely in scale from field to field and even from topic to topic inside a field.

The **value** of the activities integrated by a project could range up to many tens of millions of euro. However, there will be no minimum threshold, provided of course that the necessary ambition and critical mass are there.

On the subject of the **partnership**, IPs must be made up of at least three participants from three different Member or Associated States, of which at least two are Member States or Associated candidate countries. In practice, however, to achieve ‘ambitious’ objectives there are likely to be significantly more partners per consortium. The relevant call for proposals may, in fact, specify a higher minimum number of participants.

Typical **duration** of IPs is expected to be between three and five years.

Financial regime – main features

Community support will be in the form of a ‘grant to the budget’ paid as a contribution to costs actually incurred (excluding indirect taxes, duties, interest...) in the lifetime of the project that are both necessary and ‘economic’, as well as properly recorded in each of the participants’ accounts (or, when foreseen by the contract, in the accounts of a ‘third party’). Maximum rates of support differ according to the type of activity. Each participant must provide, among other things, a simplified annual cost statement, together with a cost certificate by an independent auditor certifying the overall total costs incurred. A major simplification is that there will be no predefined cost categories, participants being free to use their usual accounting principles.



SME and ‘third country’ participation

- The participation of SMEs in IPs is strongly encouraged
- IPs are open to participation of legal entities from ‘third’ countries. For certain groups of such countries, financial support from the EU is possible

Fast facts 4 – Cost models for FP6

There is a single family of three closely-related cost models:

- **FC:** a full cost model in which all actual direct and indirect costs can be charged;
- **FCF:** a simplified variant of the full cost model in which a flat rate of 20% of all actual direct costs (excluding subcontracting) can be charged to cover indirect costs; and
- **ACF:** an additional cost model, covering all actual, non-recurring direct costs, together with a flat rate of 20% of all these direct costs (excluding subcontracting) to cover indirect costs.

Rates of Community support

The maximum rate of Community support for FC and FCF participants is:

- 50% for RTD and innovation-related components;
- 35% for any demonstration component; and
- 100% for consortium management and training.

ACF participants will be supported at up to 100% of additional costs for all components of the project (with the exception of consortium management, for which they will be supported as under the FCF model).

A share of no more than 7% of the Community contribution will be reserved for consortium management costs reimbursed at up to 100%.

Calls for proposals

IPs will be selected following calls for proposals which will be published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities* and in various other media, such as on the Europa and CORDIS web-sites (see page 14).

Under FP6, proposals will be simplified, in particular to reflect the evolutionary nature of an IP. For example, proposals will contain an outline description of the activities for the whole duration, while a detailed implementation plan will be required only for the first 18 months of the project.

Calls for proposals may be preceded by invitations to submit **expressions of interest** in order to help focus the calls and limit over-subscription. This will also assist in the processes of proposal making and consortium building.

Evaluation procedure

Proposals will be evaluated by a **peer-review system**, strengthened to reflect the more ambitious nature of IPs. This may involve hearings of the applicants by the evaluation panel and the use of a two-stage proposal submission process – where only those applicants whose outline proposal passes the first stage will be invited to submit a full proposal.

The following considerations will be taken into account when evaluating each IP

- **Relevance to the objectives of the specific programme** (i.e. matching the project to the call)
- **Potential impact** (i.e. suitably ambitious in terms of its European dimension)
- **S&T excellence** (i.e. the project has clearly-defined objectives showing progress beyond the current 'state of the art', and an S&T approach enabling the project to achieve its research/innovation aims)
- **Quality of the consortium** (i.e. collectively the consortium is of a high standard with each participant well-suited and committed to the assigned tasks, ideally including SMEs)
- **Quality of the management** (i.e. solid management and organisation to deal with the complexity of the project and the degree of integration required, including a plan to manage the 'knowledge', intellectual property and innovation-related activities)
- **Mobilisation of resources** (i.e. ability to mobilise successfully the critical mass of resources – personnel, equipment, finance, etc. – through coherent and integrated financial and project planning)

Initial contract and advance payment

The contract will specify the maximum Community contribution to an IP, but will not specify the distribution of the grant among participants, enabling the consortium to manage its own financial affairs – and eliminating the source of much of the micro-management associated with FP5 contracts. The project will liaise with the Commission through a **co-ordinator**, and a simplified contract signature procedure will allow earlier entry into force of the contract.

Participants will be expected to sign a **consortium agreement** among themselves.

An annex to the contract will contain an overall description of the project and a detailed implementation plan – accompanied by an indicative financial plan with cost estimates broken down by activity type and participant – for only the first 18 months of the project. An advance payment, equivalent to 85% of the Community contribution anticipated for this period, will be made at the start of the project.

Annual settlement of payments

The Commission will expect an **annual report** from the consortium outlining the previous 12 months' activities, accompanied by a financial report with a management-level justification of the costs incurred over the same period. At the same time, the IP will submit its next 18-month detailed implementation and financial plan for approval.

Upon acceptance of the financial report by the Commission, an equivalent amount of the advance payment for the period will be converted into an accepted payment (subject, of course, to ex-post audits) and the outstanding advance will be supplemented to reach the equivalent of 85% of the anticipated Community contribution for the subsequent 18-month period.

In this way, optimal continuity of funding is assured throughout the project's duration.

Flexible implementation

Flexibility and management autonomy will be key elements in the implementation of IPs, as reflected in the following instances.

The **detailed implementation plan** covering the coming 18 months rolls forward annually. The **overall implementation plan** may also be modified by the consortium (without changing, however, the overall objectives and principal deliverables of the project). Both need the approval of the Commission to enter into force.

As a project evolves, the consortium may choose to take on **new partners** – sometimes subject to a competitive call organised by the IP itself, according to the contract, but *without* additional funding. Or the Commission may decide to launch its own calls for proposals to enable existing IPs to extend their scope, this time *with* additional financing. This may be a useful mechanism for enhancing the participation of SMEs.

Monitoring and audits

Reflecting the novel nature of IPs, the Commission will go still further than in FP5 from a detailed monitoring of inputs to the **strategic monitoring of outputs**. For this, the Commission envisages a reinforced monitoring scheme – involving high-level independent experts – consisting of annual reviews, a mid-term (or 'milestone') review, and an end-of-term review.

The Commission also has at its disposal a range of audits (technical, financial, technological and ethical) which it intends to use more systematically. Each IP, in fact, can expect to be subjected to at least one financial audit.

Reporting and payments schedule for a four-year integrated project

End of term report										Activity report			
										Reported costs			
3rd reporting period										Activity report		Detailed implementation plan	
										Reported costs		Adjusted advance	
2nd reporting period										Activity report		Detailed implementation plan	
										Reported costs		Adjusted advance	
1st reporting period		Activity report		Detailed implementation plan									
		Reported costs		Adjusted advance									
Starting period		Detailed implementation plan											
		Initial advance											
Month	0	6	12	Review m14 ↑	18	24	Review m26 ↑	30	36	Review m38 ↑	42	48	Final review ↑

Networks of Excellence

The networks of excellence instrument is designed to **strengthen excellence** on a particular research topic by networking together the **critical mass** of resources and expertise needed to provide European leadership and to be a world force on that topic. This expertise will be networked around a 'joint programme of activities' (JPA) aimed primarily at creating a **durable integration** of the research capacities of the network participants while, of course, at the same time, advancing knowledge on the topic.

Fast facts 5 – NoE objectives

The network of excellence is, therefore, an instrument for strengthening excellence by **tackling the fragmentation** of European research, where the main deliverable should be a **durable structuring and shaping** of the way that research is carried out on the topic of the network.

Joint programme of activities

As mentioned, NoE will be implemented through a joint programme of activities involving some or, where appropriate, all of the research capacities and activities of the participants in the relevant area to attain a critical mass of expertise in order to shape and structure the way research is carried out on the topic.

The JPA is composed of **integrating activities**, **jointly executed research**, and **activities for spreading excellence**. A **coherent management framework** is also indispensable.

Integrating activities

Integrating activities aim at creating a strong and lasting integration among the participants in the network. They could involve:

- co-ordinated programming of the partners' activities to enhance 'complementarity' and 'mutual specialisation';
- sharing research facilities, tools and platforms;
- joint management of the partners' knowledge portfolio;
- schemes for increasing staff mobility and exchanges (including perhaps the relocation of equipment and even whole teams); and
- using reinforced electronic information and communication networks in order to support interactive working among the teams involved.

Jointly executed research

Through a programme of jointly executed research to support the network's goals, networks can:

- develop new research tools and platforms for common use; and
- generate 'new knowledge' to fill gaps in and/or extend the collective knowledge portfolio.

Activities for spreading excellence

It is essential that each NoE takes up its mission of spreading excellence beyond the boundaries of its partners. Such activities could include:

- a joint programme of training for researchers and other key staff, indispensable for the steady supply of skilled personnel to ensure the sustainability of Europe's excellence in the network's field;
- communication campaigns for disseminating results (and raising public awareness of science);
- innovation-related activities, when appropriate; and
- networking activities for encouraging knowledge transfer.

Scale of critical mass and duration

Each network of excellence is expected to have ambitious goals and demonstrate 'European leadership'. It should also be a 'world force' on the topic. It must then assemble the critical mass of **resources and expertise** needed to achieve these goals.

The scale of the critical mass will vary from topic to topic. The larger networks can be expected to involve many hundreds of researchers. Networks can be more limited in size, but the necessary ambition and critical mass must be there.

Concerning its **partnership**, a network must be made up of at least three participants from three different Member or Associated States, of which at least two are Member States or Associated candidate countries. However, in practice, for a NoE to achieve durable results – reaching the necessary critical mass – the Commission would expect at least six partners per network. A minimum number of participants higher than three may be specified in the relevant call for proposals. Like IPs, networks of excellence are open to the participation of legal entities from 'third countries'. For certain groups of these countries, financial support from the EU is possible.

The **duration** of the Community support is another important aspect of the critical mass, since a network must be supported long enough for its integration to take on a lasting nature. Support, in many cases, could be needed for five years and, if justified, perhaps longer – but not more than seven years.

Calls for proposals

NoE will be selected following calls for proposals which will be published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities* and in various other media, such as on the Europa and CORDIS websites (see page 14).

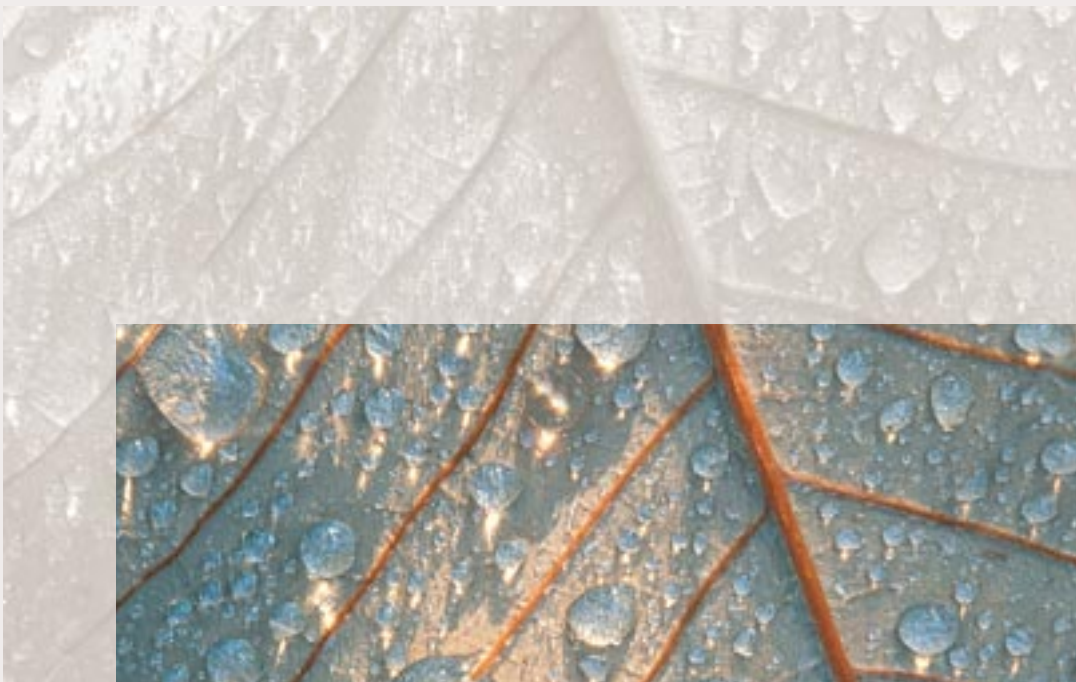
The proposal process for a NoE will be simplified to reflect the evolutionary nature of the networks. For example, application forms will require an overall description of the network's activities over the full duration of the Community support, while – at proposal stage – a detailed JPA will be required only for the first 18 months of the network's existence.

Calls for proposals may be preceded by invitations to submit **expressions of interest** in order to help focus the calls and limit over-subscription. This will help focus the calls for proposals, thereby containing over-subscription. Such procedure will also assist in the processes of proposal making and consortium building.

Evaluation procedure

The evaluation will be based on the principles of **peer review** by independent experts. The system will be strengthened to reflect the more complex goals of the networks of excellence: possibly more systematic use of remote assessment prior to panel meetings and hearings of applicants by the panel (in particular addressing questions not covered in the proposal).

Another possibility is a two-stage proposal submission process – where only those applicants whose outline proposal passes the first stage will be invited to submit a full proposal.



The following considerations will be taken into account when evaluating each NoE

- **Relevance to the objectives of the specific programme** (i.e. matching the network of excellence to the call)
- **Potential impact** (i.e. suitably ambitious in terms of its strategic impact on the structuring and shaping of the way that research is carried out on the topic, adequate plan for spreading excellence, likelihood of a durable structuring impact)
- **Excellence of the participants** (i.e. consortium composed of participants able to conduct excellent research on the topic, well-suited to the tasks assigned and assembling the critical mass of expertise and resources needed to achieve the objectives)
- **Degree of integration and the JPA** (i.e. satisfactory expected degree of integration, suitability of the JPA for that purpose, convincing commitment from the participating organisations towards a deep and durable integration)
- **Organisation and management** (i.e. secure framework for the network's decision making, quality of the management, plan for promoting gender equality)

Financial regime

Because of the nature of this instrument, and the need for a high-level institutional commitment to bring about a durable integration of the research capacities of its participants, significant effort and financial support from the Community is needed to overcome the barriers – organisational, cultural and individual – to change.

Community support will be in the form of a fixed 'grant for integration' which takes into account the expected degree of integration in the network, the number of researchers proposed for integration by all participants, the characteristics of the field of research concerned, and the JPA. In this way, the grant acts as an **incentive to integration**. The scale of the grant must be sufficient to overcome the barriers to change, while at the same time avoiding the risk of creating dependence on financial support from the Community.

Calculation of the grant for integration

Each call for proposals will contain a reference table converting the **number of researchers** into the annual average grant to be allocated to the network. The calculation of the number of researchers will be based on the following:

- a 'researcher' means research staff with at least four years of research experience or with a doctoral degree;
- a 'researcher' must be either an employee of one of the partners in the consortium or working under its direct management authority; and
- the researchers counted will be those constituting the research capacities of the participants within the framework of the network at the time of the deadline of the relevant call for proposals.

Given the importance of training within a network, a supplementary bonus scheme will be introduced for doctoral students engaged in research activities related to the network.

Fast facts 6 – Illustrative calculation of the grant

The average annual grant to a network could vary with the number of researchers as follows:

50 researchers	€1 million/year
100 researchers	€2 million/year
150 researchers	€3 million/year
250 researchers	€4 million/year
500 researchers	€5 million/year
1000 researchers and above	€6 million/year

Therefore, in this illustration, a network of **200** researchers being supported over a **five-year** period would be eligible to receive a fixed amount of **€17.5 million** (plus any bonus for doctoral students).

Initial contract and advance payment

The contract will specify the amount of the grant to a network, but not its distribution among participants, enabling the consortium to manage its own financial affairs. At the start of the contract, the Commission will make an advance payment for the first one-and-a-half years, equivalent to 85% of the foreseen grant for that 18-month period.

Participants will be expected to sign a **consortium agreement** among themselves.

Annual disbursement of the grant

The grant will be disbursed in annual instalments on the basis of results (see below), with an additional check that costs greater than the value of the grant were incurred in the implementation of the JPA. The Commission will expect an annual report from the consortium outlining the previous year's activities, accompanied by relevant financial documents. At the same time, the network will submit its next 18-month detailed JPA for approval. It may also propose to update the overall JPA, again with the Commission's approval. A supplementary advance for the following 18-month period would be paid once this process is complete.

Because the contract contains a payment-by-result scheme, the Commission will develop a robust output monitoring scheme consisting of:

- a) An annual independent review of a network's progress and its plans for the next period. The review will be based on a published set of criteria that will include, in particular, one which addresses 'the degree of integration and the efficacy of the JPA', similar to that used to evaluate the original proposal. Failure to pass the review may lead to suspension of disbursements or even termination of the contract.
- b) An end-of-term review, taking stock of achievements and assessing prospects for the future.



Fast facts 7 – Measuring integration

Integration would be measured, for example, on the basis of:

- 'mutual specialisation' and 'mutual complementarity' (i.e. especially through regular co-programming of the partners' activities);
- sharing common research infrastructures, equipment and platforms;
- regular joint execution of research projects;
- pooling of the partners' knowledge portfolio;
- joint programmes of training for researchers and other key staff;
- interactive working among partners using electronic information and communication systems; and
- coherent management framework encouraging staff mobility, exchanges, interoperability of data and other systems, as well as common approaches to science and society issues, and gender equality in research.

Evolution of the consortium

As a network evolves, the consortium may choose to take on new partners – sometimes subject to a competitive call organised by the NoE itself, according to the contract – but *without* additional funding. Or the Commission may decide to launch calls for proposals to enable existing networks of excellence to take in new participants that may have emerged since the initial proposal was made – this time *with* additional financing.

Governance

A high-level of institutional commitment from the partner organisations to the goals of a NoE will be essential for the network's success. Therefore, the Commission will encourage consortia to set up a 'governing board' consisting of senior representatives of the partnership which would oversee the integration of the members' activities, and possibly a 'scientific council' involving external experts to advise on the nature of the JPA, and particularly on the network's missions of strengthening and spreading excellence throughout Europe.

Article 169

Article 169 refers to the article in the Treaty that enables the Community to participate in research programmes undertaken jointly by several Member States, including participation in the structures created for the execution of these programmes. Associated States may also participate.

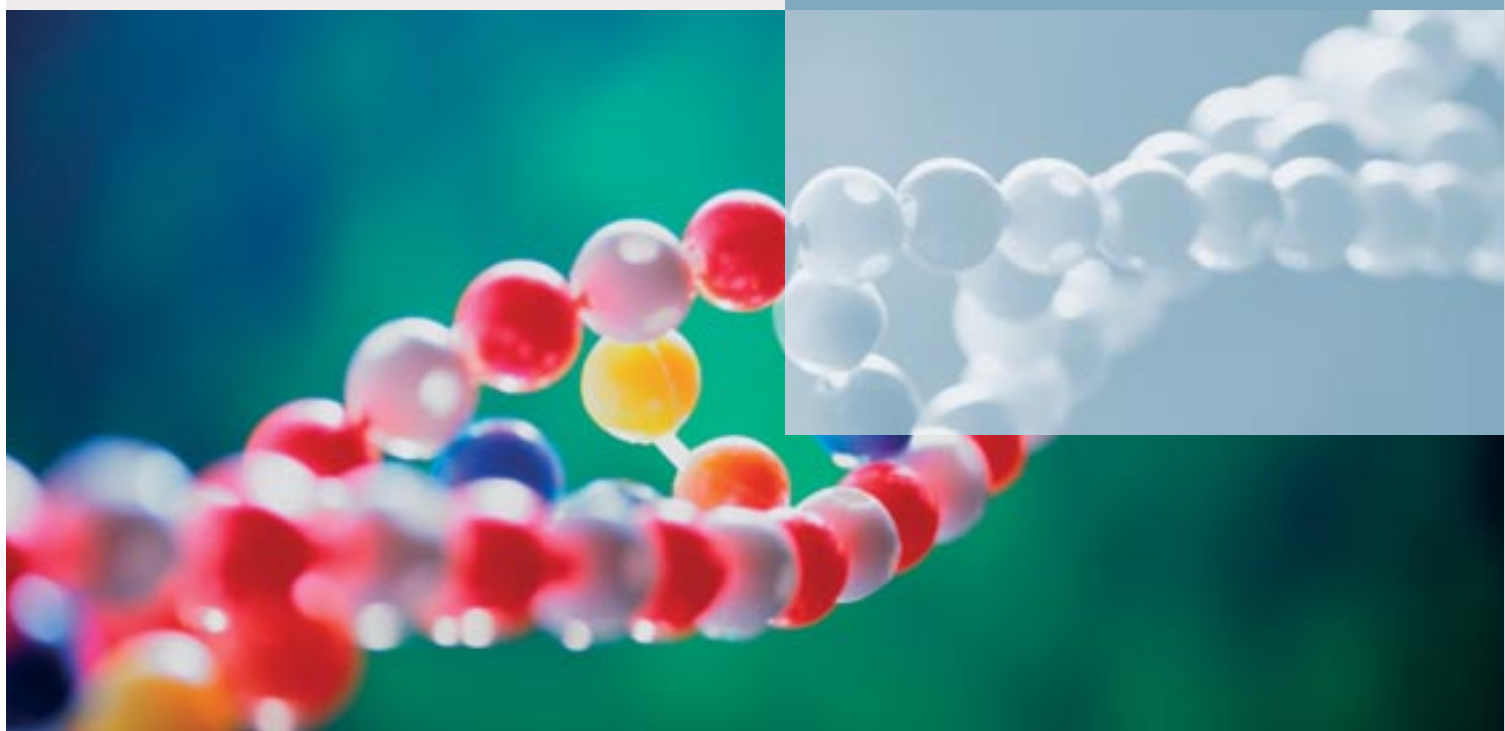
In terms of the European Research Area and, in particular, the need to help integrate and structure research in Europe, Article 169 is potentially the most powerful instrument in FP6. For example, whereas integrated projects and networks of excellence would tend to integrate the activities of individual performers of research, provisions in Article 169 allow for the integration of activities of entire national programmes in a particular research field.

Applying Article 169

To generate a proposal, each possible Article 169 arrangement requires a co-initiative between a number of Member States, perhaps represented by their national programmes, and by the Commission. Formally, it is only then that the Commission can submit the proposal to co-decision by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. The decision-making procedure for each Article 169 arrangement is effectively the same as for the Framework Programme itself.

For these reasons, it may be difficult to employ Article 169 extensively during FP6, and its use will be restricted to those research initiatives that are beyond the scope of integrated projects or networks of excellence.

A first pilot proposal, concerning a 'European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership' (EDCTP), was presented by the Commission to Council and the European Parliament at the end of August 2002.



Traditional Instruments

1. Specific targeted research projects

Specific targeted research projects aim to improve European competitiveness and meet the needs of society or Community policies. They should be sharply focused and will take one of the following two forms, or a combination of both:

- A research and technological development project designed to gain new knowledge either to improve considerably existing products, processes and services – or develop new ones – or to meet other needs of society and EU policies;
- A demonstration project designed to prove the viability of new technologies offering potential economic advantages but which cannot be commercialised directly.

Scale and duration: Projects need at least three participants established in three different Member States or Associated States, of which at least two should be Member States or Associated candidate countries. The relevant call for proposals may specify a higher minimum number of participants.

The value of the activities carried out within a project may reach up to several million euro. Typically, the duration will be two to three years (if justified, possibly more).

Eligible costs and cost models: same as those described for integrated projects.

Community support: 'grant to the budget' at up to 50% for RTD and for innovation-related activities; 35% for demonstration projects, or for the demonstration part of a combined project; and 100% for consortium management costs (not exceeding 7% of the Community contribution).

2. Co-ordination actions

Co-ordination actions are a continuation of the concerted actions/thematic networks used in FP5, in a reinforced form.

Co-ordination actions are intended to promote and support the networking and co-ordination of research and innovation activities aiming to improve integration.

They will cover the definition, organisation and management of joint or common initiatives, as well as activities such as the organisation of conferences, meetings, the performance of studies, exchange of personnel, exchange and dissemination of 'good practices', and the setting up of information systems and expert groups.

Community support: 'grant to the budget' of up to 100%.

3. Specific support actions

The specific support actions for use in the priority thematic areas are essentially a continuation of the accompanying measures used in FP5.

Specific support actions are intended to support the implementation of FP6, and may also be used to help prepare for future Community research policy activities. Within the priority thematic areas, they will involve, for example, conferences, seminars, studies and analyses, high-level scientific awards and competitions, working groups and expert groups, operational support and dissemination, information and communication activities, or a combination of these.

Specific support actions will also be implemented to stimulate, encourage and facilitate the participation of small research teams, SMEs, newly-developed and remote research centres – as well as organisations from the candidate countries – in the activities of the priority thematic areas, especially through networks of excellence and integrated projects. Implementing these actions will rely on specific information and assistance, including the network of National Contact Points established by Member States and the Associated States, at local, regional and national level, and will aim at ensuring a smooth transition from FP5 to FP6.

Community support: 'grant to the budget' of up to 100% of the budget, if necessary as a lump sum.

Finding information on FP6 Instruments

Information about FP6 – and the instruments for implementing FP6 research activities – is already available on several websites (see box). A number of printed publications on FP6 and ERA are also envisaged. In addition to this brochure, the *'Guide for applicants under the Sixth Framework Programme for European Research and Technological Development'* will provide prospective participants in EU research programmes – and anyone

interested in the future of European research – with a general overview of the Sixth Framework Programme.

Furthermore, National Contact Points established in all Member States and Associated States provide assistance to prospective applicants.

New instruments:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/networks-ip.html>

Model contract:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/working-groups/model-contract/index_en.html

FP6 FAQs:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/pdf/faq_en.pdf

Official documents relating to FP6:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/documents_en.html

Locating a call:

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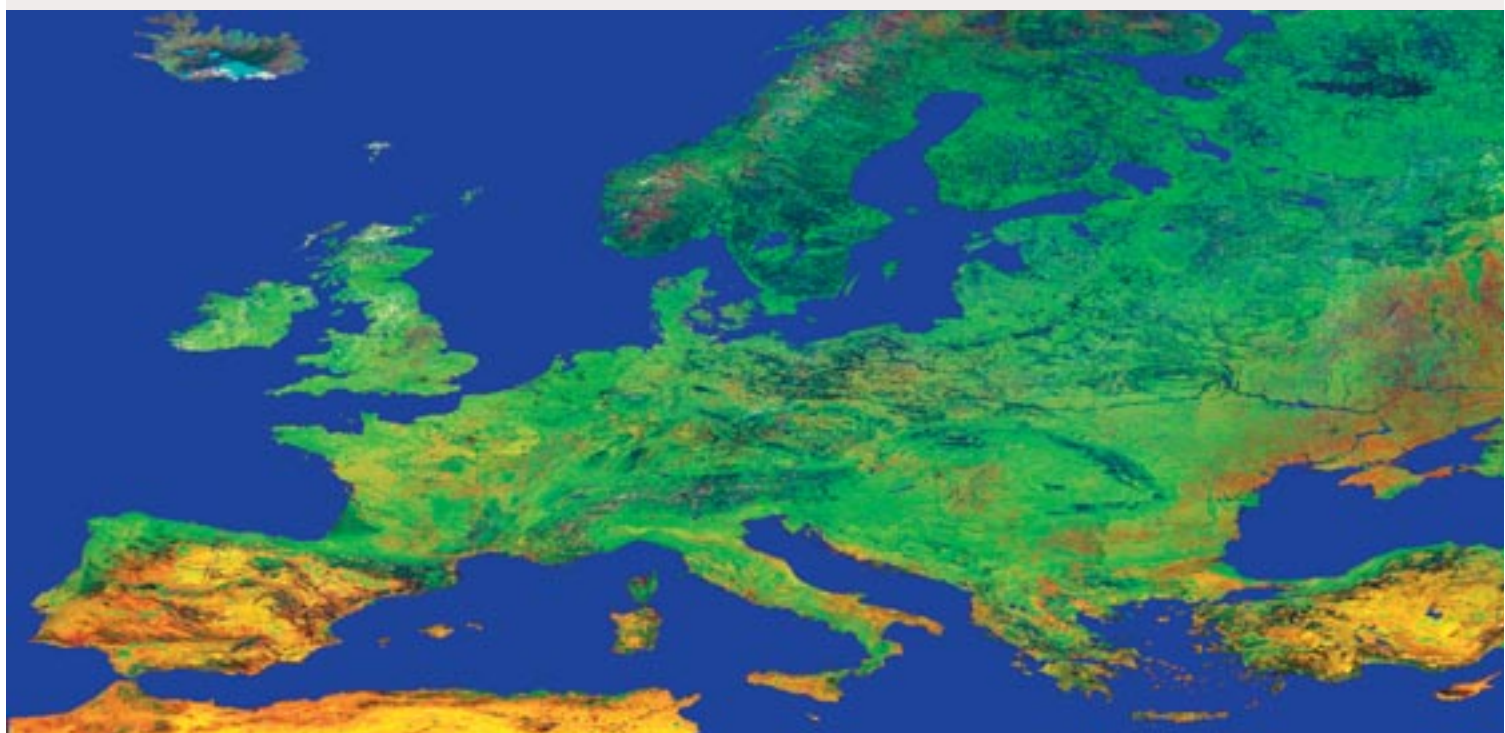
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