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Community Research

7th Framework Programme Specific Programme “Ideas”

**European Commission
Directorate B
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Community Research

FP7 (2007-2013) – Building the Europe of knowledge

- Cooperation - thematic research areas
- **Ideas - frontier research (ERC)**
- People - human resources
- Capacities:
 - Infrastructures
 - SMEs
 - Regions of knowledge
 - Research potential
 - Science in society



Specific programme “Ideas”

- Support to individual teams, to promote excellence through Europe-wide competition
- Frontier research
- Investigator-driven
- All areas of science and technology
- Independent scientific governance (Scientific Council)
- Dedicated implementation structure (Executive Agency)
- Simplified grant mechanism



European added value through Europe-wide competition

- Encouraging and supporting the finest talent
- Selecting the most promising research areas
- Giving European visibility to research leaders
- Catalysing the creation of a more efficient European research system



Why frontier research?

A new understanding of basic research is needed to avoid outmoded distinctions:

- Between “basic” and “applied” research
- Between “science” and “technology”
- Between “traditional” disciplines

The term “Frontier research” reflects:

- going beyond these categories;
- that basic research in science and technology is of critical importance to economic and social welfare;
- that research at and beyond the frontiers of understanding is an intrinsically risky venture;
- that it is characterised by an absence of disciplinary boundaries.



Individual team

The term “**individual team**”, designating the **ERC unit of support**

- The principal investigator (the ‘team leader’) has
 - power to assemble his/her research group regardless of size
 - and the freedom to choose the research topic.
- Individual teams may consist of any grouping of researchers which is appropriate for the conduct of a project; thus members may be drawn from one or several legal entities, from either within or across national boundaries, including third countries



Implementation requirements

- Autonomous (independent of political interest)
- Efficient (low bureaucracy)
- With necessary financial means (at programme and project level)

But also....

- Accountable (scientific, financial)
- Appropriate European Structure



The European Research Council (ERC): structural components

- **Scientific Council**
- **Dedicated implementation structure**
(Executive Agency; possible Article 171
structure later)



ERC Scientific Council (SC)

- Names of SC founding members were announced on 18 July 2005 following an independent procedure carried out by the ERC Identification Committee
- Independent; respected scientific personalities, reflecting the full scope of European research; acting in their personal capacity
- Responsible for oversight and guarantee of quality in scientific decision-making
- Prior to FP7 decision, would act as advisory body in the development of the Specific programme “Ideas”
- Nominated by EC decision



Role of the ERC Scientific Council (SC)

- Establish overall scientific strategy
- Ensure the preparation of the work programme (including calls for proposals, detailed criteria of excellence, ...)
- Define peer review methodology; ensure selection and accreditation of experts
- Monitor quality of operations and evaluate programme implementation
- Assure communication with the scientific community



ERC Dedicated Implementation Structure

- Execute work programme as established by the Scientific Council
- Implement calls for proposals (information and support to applicants; proposal reception/eligibility check; etc.)
- Organise peer review evaluation
- Establish grant agreements, transfer funds
- Administer scientific and financial aspects and follow-up of grant agreements



The European Commission's duties

- Guarantor of the autonomy and integrity of the ERC
- Ensure that implementation follows principles of autonomy
- Adopt work programme as established by the Scientific Council
- “Double lock” by the Programme Committee
- Provide annual report on ERC operations to Council and European Parliament



Frontier Research Grant: Key principles

An investment in research and research leaders

- Support for investigator-driven research projects implemented by individual teams
- Attractive (budget size, duration and conditions)
- Administratively simple
- Flexible in application



Peer review process

Scientific Council will set parameters and oversee the process.

- Excellence and transparency are key principles
- Permanent pool of accredited peer reviewers needed (= World's best scientists and scholars)
- High throughput, quasi-continuous processes may be necessary



Timetable

2005	Apr 6th	FP7 proposal
	Jul 18th	Scientific Council names published
	Sep 21st	Specific programme proposal
	Oct 18th	Scientific Council starts work
	Dec 23th	Rules of participation proposal
	Dec 16th	Decision on Financial perspectives
2006		Decisions on FP7 \Rightarrow SPs \Rightarrow RoP
		Decision on Agency structure
		First calls for proposals
2007		Start of funding



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Further information

Basic research website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/future/basic_research/index_en.html