

SMEs: How To Access EU Funding?

BIOCHEM Knowledge Transfer Newsletter #1

Anyone who has ever had the pleasure of submitting a European funding application will agree that it is not easy – at times it may seem that you need a degree in form filling and an awful lot of patience. Trying to identify and apply for funding on a European level, while trying to coerce information from a number of partners and hit the submission date, can be completely overwhelming – in particular for small and medium enterprises with limited resources.

These few steps below will hopefully offer some guidance in identifying the best source of funds and explain the application process.

1. What kind of funding is available?

There are currently over 450 funds available from European institutions. What type of funding you apply for will ultimately be determined by your sector and the research or work you intend to carry out.

Some of the larger funding streams are referred to as “competitions” as only the winning submissions are selected for funding.

During the course of the year a competition or call will be announced giving companies or individuals the opportunity to submit a project proposal. Prior to the calls coming out, there is normally a draft of the call in circulation. Usually this information can be gained from various sources such as your National Contact Point.

Below are just some of the more widely known funding streams available for Research & Development within Europe:

Type of grant	What will it fund?	Who can apply and do I need partners?	What level of funding will I receive?	Duration of Funding
Eco-Innovation	Techniques/products/services for the reduction/solutions for environmental waste. Especially exploitation and market replica projects	Open to all organisations. Priority for SMEs. Single application can be made	Up to 40% for large companies, 60% for small companies and 50% for the rest	3 years

Eurostars	R&D all areas for development of new product, process or service and must be market driven	Open to all organisations. Minimum 2 partners from 2 countries	50% for SME. % of project subcontracted depends on individual participating countries	3 years
Life+	Providing funding for grant funding for environmental projects in three areas: nature and biodiversity; environment policy and governance; information and communication	Open to all organisations. No partners required	50% although there are exceptions of up to 75% for priority areas	3 years
Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE)	IEE will fund capacity building, spreading of know-how, skills and methods, exchanges in experience, development of market intelligence etc	Open to public and private organisations. Minimum 3 partners from 3 countries	Up to 75% of costs	3 years
Framework Programme 7 (FP7)	Europe's main programme for R&D. It is split into several categories (see below) however collaborative research is the key area.	Open to all organisations. Minimum 3 partners from 3 countries	75% for SMEs and RTDs; 50% for large companies and 100% of management	3 years

2. Where do you find the information on Funding?

There are a number of ways to find out what European funding is available. You can log on and sign up on any of the following websites to receive regular updates on new CALLS.

- CORDIS http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html
- EEN (Enterprise Europe Network) http://www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm
- ERRIN (European Regions Research & Innovation Network) <http://www.errin.eu/en/>
- European Small Business Portal http://ec.europa.eu/small-business/index_en.htm
- NCP (National Contact Points) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ncp_en.html
- Welcome Europe <http://www.welcomeurope.com/>

3. How will I know if you are eligible?

The European Commission does not discriminate against large companies although they are keen to have a good uptake by SMEs. If you are a SME but have more than 25% of your company owned by a large company you will be classed as a large company.

Generally you have to have been trading more than 12 months and have a turnover of more than twice what you are applying for in grant aid.

It is best to check what your company status is in the first instance, then to speak to your NCP to ensure that you are eligible.

4. How do you submit your interest or proposal?

Each Submission is different; it can either be in a single stage submission or you may be required to submit an initial Registration of Interest which will be a summary of your potential project. If you are successful at this stage you will be required to submit your full proposal.

All submissions are made online. You are encouraged to submit your draft proposal then re-submit up right up until the Deadline. This way should you encounter any technical difficulties you will have already submitted at least the draft.

5. How do you identify and find potential partners?

Once you have your project outline there are a number of ways to identify potential partners for your collaborative project

- ✓ Your existing contacts and supply chain
- ✓ Through the NCP
- ✓ Through the Enterprise Europe Network
- ✓ Through ERRIN
- ✓ Through CORDIS

6. Is Framework Programme 7 right for me?

The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) is a €50 billion 7 year programme – funded through the European Commission – designed to support a wide range of participants from universities, through public authorities to small enterprises in their research and development activities. It is the largest funding programme currently available within Europe.



There are 6 key areas of funding for which Calls or Competitions are announced during any given year.

These Competitions are announced on CORDIS but your NCP or your EEN contact should have draft copies of this prior to the Call.

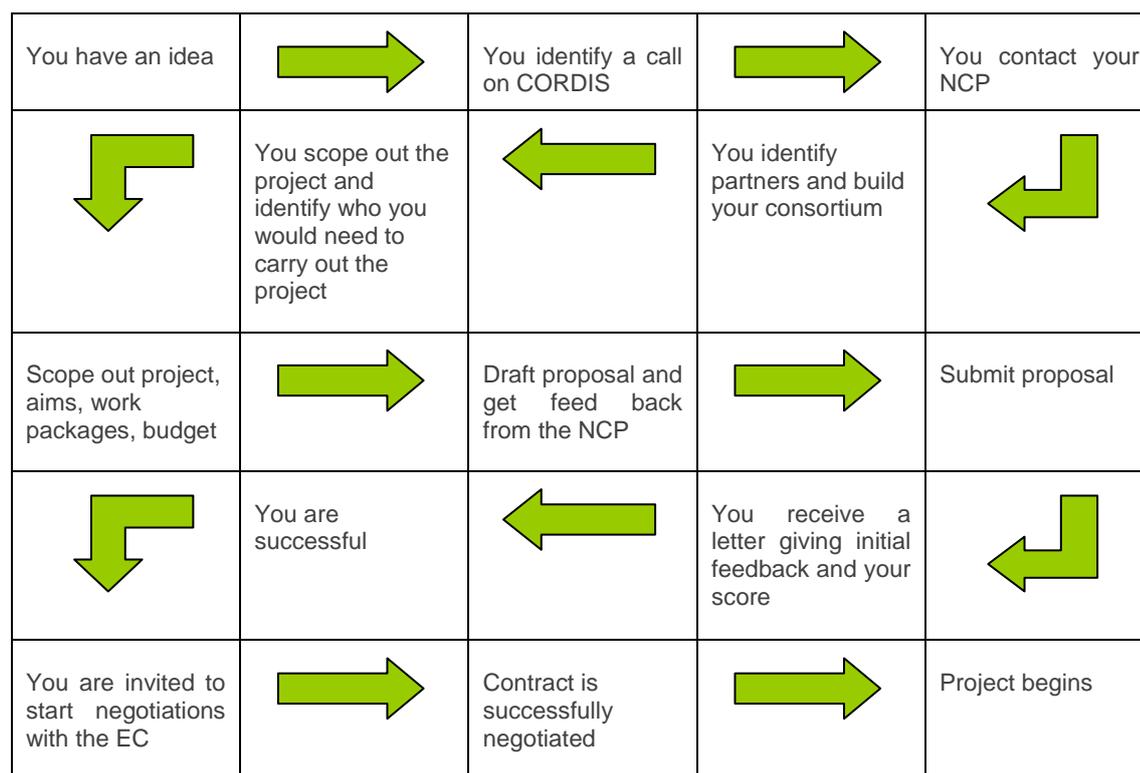
The types of funding areas are:

- **Cooperation** funds collaborative projects in key scientific and technology areas across ten different themes;

- **Ideas** is frontier research or investigator driven specifically for new opportunities in scientific and technological advance and new markets;
- **People (Marie Curie)** are fellowships dedicated to stimulating researchers cross border career development;
- **Capacities** incorporates the broad areas of infrastructure, policies, science in society;
- **Euratom** funds atomic energy research activities;
- **JTI (Joint Research Initiatives)** Public/private partnerships involving industry, the research community and public authorities.

Each year a number of Calls or Competitions are announced for funding. These will be preceded by Draft Calls which the NCP's will normally have 2-3 months in advance. If you have a project idea, you should make contact with your NCP to get a first initial reaction.

The route to Collaborative FP7



7. Your checklist

- ✓ You need a good idea and long term R&D plan
- ✓ Engage with the NCP they are there to help
- ✓ Identify lots of opportunities and do not limit to one call

- ✓ Make sure your project fits exactly with the call
- ✓ Scope out the project and identify partners early
- ✓ Make sure all your partners are financially viable
- ✓ Have faith and a lot of patience

8. CASE STUDY – SUBMITTING A FP7 PROPOSAL

Ideally from conception to completion a FP7 project should take around 12 months but as the following shows this is not always the case, although in this case it did have a happy ending!

Selective Antibodies Ltd (SAL) UK

Prof Colin Self – Founder Director

Successfully awarded €5 million project to for the Detection of toxins, chemicals and explosives after major disasters in Europe.

The project SALIENT was for the provision of High Performance point of need detection systems for small molecules.



July 2008	SAL attended R&D clinic hosted by the EEN North East England with project idea looking for funding. His had a novel idea to identify small molecules.
July 2008	A Workshop was organised by the EEN North East England to scope out project and identify calls. Two potential areas of interest were identified prior to the calls coming out: Health and Security (where the same technology could be used).
August 2008	SAL attended the Security Information Day in Brussels to ensure his project met with the Call and met with the NCP.
September 2008	Partners were identified with the support of the EEN using the Network and CORDIS. As SAL were a SME and unable to lead they identified another company within their Region to lead the bid on their behalf.
October-December 2008	SAL met with partners, developed work packages, budgets and timescales.
December 2008	Submitted Final Proposal.
Mar 2009	Results announced SALIENT scored 13.5 ranked 7th and tentatively awarded €3.36 million grant.
June 2009	The Lead Partner was forced to pull out because it failed to meet the financial audit and the search for a new partner began.

July 2009	Identified new Lead Partner.
August-August 2010	Negotiations began with the European Commission.
September 2010	The project finally had its kick off meeting in Newcastle, UK - 26 months after the first meeting.

Glossary

CALL	The announcement of funding
CORDIS	Community Research and Development Information Service for Science, Research and Development - the official source of information on the seventh framework programme (FP7) calls for proposals http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_en.html
EEN	Enterprise Europe Network http://www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm
ERRIN	European Regions Research & Innovation Network http://www.errin.eu/en/
FP7	Seventh Framework Programme - the largest funding stream available in Europe
NCP	National Contact Points for advice on FP7 http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ncp_en.html
Welcome Europe	Monitoring, training, consultancy on European funding and public affairs http://www.welcomeurope.com/
R&D	Research and development
RTD	Research, technical development
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
