

## **Activity 7.7 Strengthening European research facilities in third countries: INCO-LAB activity (FP7-INCO-2011-7, INCO-LAB)**

### **Technical content/ scope**

The Member States and Associated Countries have as an objective to increase their coordination in third countries, through in particular maximising the use of their own research facilities in these countries. The objective of the INCO-LAB activity is to use the joint research institutes funded by one or several Member States and located in third countries as a catalyst to structure and increase the cooperation with third countries.

The objectives of the INCO-LAB activity are to:

- Open the activities of the joint institutes to researchers from at least 3 different Member States and Associated Countries other than those owning the facilities;
- Increase the scientific cooperation between researchers from the Member States and Associated Countries and those of the host country through the involvement of additional researchers in ongoing research activities as well as in the preparation of new joint projects via the organisation of joint seminars, summer schools and similar activities,
- Prepare the way for opening the institutional arrangement of the joint institutes to additional Member States or Associated Countries governments/ministries, research organisations.

The proposals must address all 3 objectives.

### **Proposed activities**

In order to achieve these objectives, the activity should cover:

- The physical participation of researchers from the Member States and/or Associated Countries in the joint institute; covering the costs for their travel, subsistence and salary.
- The enhancement of the research capacity of the joint institute with a view of further opening it to new participating researchers; this would cover resources, consumables, support staff, supplies as well as depreciation of equipment.
- The preparation and implementation of future joint activities, typically the organisation of workshops, seminars or any other similar activities.

The researchers' stay in the joint institutes could last from a few months to a few years depending on the type of activities. The costs of researchers incl. PhD students and post doctoral researchers can be covered. These costs as well as the applicable salaries/rates of the researchers will be defined by the joint institute.

The requested European Union contribution to personnel costs should constitute the main fraction of the total European Union contribution; the requested European Union contribution to equipment should not exceed 30% of the total European Union contribution and should be justified on the basis of a specific research programme aimed at developing cooperation between European and third country researchers.

The proposals should provide a detailed planning for the participation of researchers in the joint institute and should specify how the positions will be advertised and how the researchers will be selected<sup>1</sup>.

### **Funding scheme(s)**

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<sup>1</sup> The joint institute should take into consideration the Commission Recommendation of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and on a Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers

The funding scheme that applies is the 'Coordination and Support Actions' (supporting action). The European Union contribution for each project is expected to be about EUR 2 million. The typical duration of the project would be up to 4 years.

## **Participants**

The eligible joint institutes must be the result of institutional arrangements<sup>2</sup> based on a bilateral or multilateral agreement, contract or memorandum of understanding between at least one partner – government, ministry or a research organisation – of an EU Member State or Associated Country with a counterpart in a third country concerned. National institutes of a Member State or an Associated Country, which are located in a third country and which are the result of an agreement with the third country are also eligible. The eligible joint institute can be characterized as follows:

- 1) an independent legal entity established in the target third country. It should have a strategic research mission, should support directly research activities; or
- 2) a joint Science & Technology centre, which is not a separate legal entity from its funding partner(s). It should have a strategic research mission, support directly research activities and should be established in one of the target third country.

In the first case, the proposal will be submitted directly by the joint institute; in the second case it will be submitted by the funding partners as participants.

Institutes, which depend solely on national funding from EU Member States or/and Associated countries are not eligible under this call. Joint institutes which are exclusively funded by private organisations are not eligible under this call.

The eligible joint institutes must be established in one of the target third country, virtual laboratories or network should not be targeted by this Activity. The proposals should contain all necessary legal information justifying the eligibility of the joint institutes.

## **Areas open to this call**

The call will target joint institutes located in the following countries:

- Area 1: Brazil
- Area 2: China
- Area 3: India
- Area 4: Japan
- Area 5: Russia
- Area 6: USA

It is important to have as many countries as possible covered under the call. For this reason, the following scheme for selection of projects will be applied: at least one project per Area of the Activity 7.7 of the work programme will be funded, provided that it has passed thresholds of all evaluation criteria.

Therefore, the highest ranked proposal for a given Area will be considered for funding, subject to the result of the evaluation and availability of the budget. After allocating a budget to the best projects in this way, all remaining projects from each Area will be ranked together in one list according to the marks obtained during evaluation. The remaining budget will be allocated to the projects according to their position in this overall ranking without further concern for country coverage. If there is no proposal above thresholds in a given Area, the indicative budget of this Area will be added to that remaining budget. The panel of experts evaluating the proposals will

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<sup>2</sup> The institutional arrangements must be established before the publication of the call.

apply this rule when recommending a priority order for the proposals, in particular for proposals with the same score.

### **Socio-economic dimension of research**

Where relevant, account should be taken of possible socio-economic impacts of research, including risks and opportunities. A sound understanding of where such benefits might arise and their nature should be demonstrated, both at the level of research design and of project implementation and/or research management. In this context, and where appropriate, the proposal should ensure engagement of relevant stakeholders e.g. user groups, civil society organisations, policy makers or the media. A multi-disciplinary approach should be adopted through the involvement of researchers from social sciences and /or humanities. Foresight and other forward looking activities should be integrated within the proposal wherever appropriate. Proposals raising ethical or security concerns are also encouraged to pay attention to wider public outreach.

### **Gender dimension**

The pursuit of scientific knowledge and its technical application towards society requires the talent, perspectives and insight that can only be assured by increasing diversity in the research workforce. Therefore, all projects are encouraged to have a balanced participation of women and men in their research activities and raise awareness on combating gender prejudices and stereotypes. When human beings are involved gender differences may exist. These will be addressed as an integral part of the research to ensure the highest level of scientific quality. In addition, specific actions to promote gender equality in research can be financed as part of the project, as specified in the Appendix 8 of the Negotiation Guidance Notes.

### **Expected impact**

The outcomes of the activity should be:

- Broadening of the European participation in the joint institutes while ensuring gender balance;

Increased cooperation with targeted third countries;

- Increased visibility and scientific excellence of the joint institutes;
- Help maximising the initial investment of a small number of Member States to benefit the whole European Union;
- Foster future collaborative research projects between European and third countries in areas of mutual interest and for mutual benefit.