

# RESEARCHERS' NIGHTS 2010

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Preliminary remark:

The list of questions and answers below has been elaborated on the basis of the previous years' experiences, and in particular of the issues that didn't always appear crystal-clear to the participants. The objective of this document consists of anticipating and helping solving concerns you might face during the whole process, but doesn't prevent you neither from consulting the several detailed guides made available, nor from directly asking for information to your Project Officer.

## I. GENERALITIES

### What does the "Researchers' night" consist of? What are its objectives?

- The Researchers' night, launched at European level under the "Researchers in Europe 2005" Initiative, consists of a one-night event offering to the public at large "edutainment" activities which allow the visitors to improve their knowledge about researchers and research while having a good time on the fourth Friday night of September.
- Its main objective is to bring closer to one another public at large and researchers, whichever the topic of the research they carry on, as to allow an improved mutual understanding; as a side-effect, Researchers' night should also allow convincing young people to consider scientific careers as a valid option, and contribute to a global improvement of the researchers' environment in Europe.

### What specific requirements should selected projects comply with?

- Take place on fourth Friday of September, e.g. on 24 September 2010, except for Israel which for strong cultural reasons is expected to choose a date as close as possible to the 24th September 2010;
- Address the public at large: all categories of age, all types of skills, whether scientific or not scientific profile;
- Be focused on researchers as human beings, and, as such, actively involve researchers at all implementation stages;
- Offer a balanced combination of science-linked activities (demonstrations, simulations, hands-on experiments...) and festive ones (games, quizzes, competitions...)
- Plan at least one "European corner" (see "specific requirements" dedicated document)

### Could the Researchers' night make part of a longer lasting event? (Science week, science days...)

Yes. Two conditions have however to be satisfied in such a case:

- The Researchers' night has to constitute a sort of cornerstone of the longer-lasting event (opening, closing, specific day...)

- The costs linked to the Researchers'night itself have to be easily identified in the accounting of the applicant. (The EU contribution being obviously limited to the costs related to the Night itself).

#### What is the nature of the call?

The call is an open call for proposals with a fixed deadline (13 January 2010), launched and implemented under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, technological development and demonstration activities (FP7). This specific call is related to FP 7 "Coordination and support actions (support)" under the Specific Programme "PEOPLE".

This notably means that:

- No research activity is intended to be undertaken in this framework;
- The EU support might go up to 100 % of the eligible costs;
- Indirect costs will be deemed to represent 7 % of the direct costs (except subcontracting and resources set at disposal by third parties outside the participants' premises).

#### In which language should the proposals be submitted?

Proposals may legally be submitted in all European official languages. For the sake of evaluation and in order not to lengthen the processing delays, it is however recommended to submit the proposal in English.

## II. PARTNERSHIP

#### Who can participate?

All legal entities, identified either as natural or legal persons considered under national, Community or international law, established in an EU Member or Associated State or Candidate Country in FP7, e.g. researchers, private and public research organisations, academia, companies, including SMEs, public authorities, schools, science musea, parents /teachers associations, mobility centres, foundations, and the media... (List not exhaustive)

#### What is the minimum number of participants?

Coordination and Support actions-support (CSA) may be implemented by a single legal entity. Consortia composed of different stakeholders and in particular involving industrial representatives are however welcome and encouraged. The involvement (direct as legal participants in the grant agreement with the Commission and/or indirect as "cooperating bodies" not signing the grant agreement) of the major actors of the local/regional/national research community and of industrial partners will be considered an asset.

#### Do the projects require a multinational partnership?

A multinational partnership, although welcome, is not necessary.

### III. GEOGRAPHICAL EXTENT OF THE PROPOSALS

#### What should be the geographical coverage of each proposal?

Applicants obviously determine the most relevant geographical coverage for their proposal. It should however be pointed out that too narrow an area could prevent the proposal from reaching significant attendance objectives. The assessment will however be conducted on a case by case basis. It is also worth mentioning that efforts aimed at reaching remote and rural areas will be appreciated at the evaluation stage.

#### What should be the ideal geographical distribution of the proposals at European level?

At overall level, the European Commission would intend to fund at least one Researchers' night per country covered by the present call (27 Member States, Croatia, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey). The evaluation of the proposals however remains exclusively based on the quality of the proposals and their compliance with the requirements. In clear terms, this means that being the only proposal in a determined country doesn't ensure a systematic funding regardless of the quality of the proposal.

#### How many proposals could be selected per country?

As earlier mentioned, the European Commission would intend to fund at least one Researchers' night per country covered. Should more than one proposal be selected and funded for a determined country, coordinators of funded proposals would be informed of the other proposals potentially funded in their country and would be expected to define a common awareness campaign at national/regional level (common visual identity, participation in common radio TV programmes, common posters..., common website). This common national awareness campaign, which is likely to represent several scale economies, does obviously not prevent the individual projects to undertake a more specific campaign addressing a more restricted geographical area (local or regional level).

#### What "average attendance" does the Commission expect?

"Mass participation" is clearly a notion that has to be appreciated according to the very context of the various actions, and in particular the country concerned. As a rule, an objective of over 5,000 visitors per project would seem sensible.

It's worth pointing out that, when estimating the potential number of people likely to be reached through their project, applicants should take into consideration not only the visitors directly present during the event, but also all those who could be reached through the awareness campaign, e.g. through Radio, TV, popular newspapers, Internet... those two approximate figures will be very helpful for the evaluators when assessing the potential impact of the proposals submitted.

## IV. FINANCIAL ISSUES

### What is the overall indicative budget for this call?

The indicative budget for the call amounts € 3,500,000. Although the notion of "average contribution" of a project is not really relevant, since the contribution will be calculated on the basis of the actual costs, varying from one project to the other according to the activities planned, the scale of the project, the geographical location etc, one may consider that a 90.000 € contribution would represent the average (knowing that some projects will request a higher contribution and others a smaller one).

### Which costs can be considered as "direct eligible costs"?

Direct eligible costs are all the costs directly linked to the implementation of the project, and indispensable to its achievement, i.e. all the activities necessary to the implementation of the Researchers' night in all its components.

The activities will be organised around the four following components (Work Packages):

- Awareness campaign: conception/realisation of promotional material (leaflets, gadgets, posters, brochures...), various announcements on different medias (newspapers, radio, TV, websites...), organisation of press conferences, elaboration of a logo, setting up and maintenance of a website, programmes on radio, TV, conception and production of promotional material (such as posters, banners, leaflets, inserts, gadgets...) and, a more general sense, all the activities aimed at making as many people as possible aware of the Researchers' night and its objectives and convincing as large an audience as possible to directly take part in the event.
- Implementation of the night itself: preparatory works (purchase of consumables, renting of equipment, setting up of booths, conception/realisation of quizzes, enigmas, demonstrations, renting of premises...) and implementation of the activities (animation on site, hostesses if any, technical services during the night...)
- Impact assessment: this may cover both the analysis of the current situation (i.e. current public perception of researchers and their role) and the assessment of the event's impact itself, such as elaboration of questionnaires/interviews, surveys about the public perception of the researchers' job after having taken part in the Researchers' night, realisation of interviews on site, processing of the answers, elaboration of final impact assessment...For projects which actually continue previous similar events, the analysis carried out in the framework of the previous events should be taken into consideration and the evolution should be described.
- Management: all costs linked to the processing of data (human, financial, accounting...) at project's level, as well as the coordination of different partners' and different sites' activities; in multi partner projects, the coordinator as such should obviously have the highest management costs but other participants might also incur some of them (links with coordinator/central management cell, in particular in case of multi-location projects).

### What about the so-called "indirect costs"?

Indirect eligible costs are all those eligible costs which cannot be identified by the participant as being directly attributed to the project but which can be identified and justified by its accounting system as being incurred in direct relationship with the eligible direct costs attributed to the project, such as for example: phone, mail, lighting, heating, electricity, cleaning, security...

### Which indirect costs are eligible?

A distinction has to be made between the indirect costs to be declared and those taken into consideration as being eligible:

- The indirect costs that have to be declared : they will be based on the method chosen by the participant, EXCEPT for those (research organisations, public bodies, SMEs and secondary and higher education establishments) benefiting from a 60 % flat rate for indirect costs, who will have to declare a 20 % flat rate;
- The indirect costs that will be taken into consideration: whichever the method chosen by a participant regarding the determination of the indirect costs, in the framework of coordination and supporting actions, indirect costs will be deemed to represent 7 % of the direct costs (except subcontracting and resources set at disposal by third parties outside the participants' premises).

In other terms:

- Declared indirect costs might be, according to the calculation method applied by the participant either actual indirect costs, or simplified method for calculating indirect costs, or 20 % flat rate of the direct costs;
- Eligible (and paid) indirect costs will be: as a maximum 7 % of the direct costs (except subcontracting and resources set at disposal by a third party outside the premises of a participant)

### Which share of the total costs may management costs represent?

Management costs consist of: costs related to the technical management at project level, to the overall legal, contractual, ethical, financial and administrative management, to the general coordination of knowledge management (amongst all partners), to the overseeing of gender-linked issues in the project, ...

Although no maximum share limit is fixed for management costs, it is expected that these costs will be higher in multi-partner projects than in those having one single beneficiary. The eligibility of the management costs share is left to the appreciation of the relevant Project Officer. A 10 % share of the total direct costs should however be considered as a theoretical maximum in case of a multi partner project.

### What percentage of funding may be requested?

EU support in favour of Coordination and Support Actions (Support) may amount up to 100 % of the eligible costs. The participants are however warmly encouraged to search financial active

involvement of local/regional/national stakeholders. As a consequence, adequately co-funded projects demonstrating support by national, regional or local authorities or organisations will be favourably considered during the evaluation, the national, regional or local environment being however also taken into consideration.

#### On what kind of bank account will the EU contribution be paid?

The contribution will be paid on the coordinator's bank account. This has to be an "interest-bearing bank account", (either in mono partner or multi partner projects). This means, in other words, that a coordinator should ensure that the bank account on which the EU contribution will be paid is bearing interest. This rule applies to all entities, both public and private. Furthermore, at the reporting stage, the coordinator will have to declare the amount of the interests produced by the advance payment (as a rule 80 % of the total contribution as stipulated in the Article 5 of the Grant agreement);

- In case of multi beneficiary grants: this applies for the amounts due to be paid to the other partners in case of multi beneficiary grants and not yet distributed;
- In case of mono beneficiary grants: this applies to the amounts paid on the coordinator's account and not used for the project's purposes.

For the sake of clarity, should you be the coordinator of a previous project and not have opened any interest-bearing bank account in the framework of this previous project, this would mean :

- That you would have to open a new bank account corresponding to the rule with a view to receiving the future EU contribution of the current project;
- That no action will be taken regarding the "old" project, since this arrangement only applies to future Grant agreements and negotiations concluded after 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009.

#### What will occur with the interests declared?

By definition, the declaration of the interests perceived will occur at the reporting stage, i.e. at a moment when the advance payment will already have been received by the coordinator and split between the participants in case of a multi partner project. The amount remaining to be paid from the EU contribution will be calculated as follows:

Maximum EU contribution (as stated in Article 5 of the grant agreement, provided the eligible costs are at least equal) - (advance already perceived + interests declared) = amount to be paid at the end of the project.

#### What about the Guarantee fund?

Introduced under FP 7 as a substitute to the previously existing "financial collective liability" of the participants, the Guarantee Fund aims at limiting the risks incurred by both REA and the participants when implementing RTD indirect actions. Its modalities are rather simple: at the conclusion of each Grant agreement, a maximum amount representing 5 % of the EU contribution as stipulated in the Grant Agreement is "retained" as a contribution to the Guarantee fund. This 5 % share remains however due to the project and will be re-paid at the end of it, once the final report and financial statements are approved. This is illustrated below: example:

Total contribution as stipulated in the GA: 100

Advance payment (as a rule): 80



Amount actually paid to the beneficiary at the signature of the GA: 80 - 5 (5 % of the total contribution) = 75

Amount to be paid once final reporting approved: 20 (total contribution 100 - advance payment 20) + reimbursement of the 5 % retained for the Guarantee fund<sup>1</sup>.

Be aware that there might be a slightly different timing for the payment of the remaining amount (20 in the above example) and the reimbursement of the 5 % retained since they come from different budget sources within the services.

### What about "third parties"?

A third party is, by definition, a body not signing the Grant agreement. As such, it doesn't have any legal link with the REA, but its costs might be taken into consideration under certain conditions. Third parties can be classified under 3 groups, i.e. Subcontractors, third parties making resources available without carrying any part of the works, and third parties carrying out part of the works linked to the project.

#### I. Subcontractors:

- These are bodies supplying services to the participants (such as for example a communication company which would conceive and implement the awareness campaign or part of it); they are paid by the participants having asked for their services on the basis of an invoice;
- Such invoice is to be considered as a cost of the participant(s) and is included in its direct costs statements (under the "subcontracting" heading) during the reporting stage (C form);
- They do not produce any indirect costs (since indirect costs of the subcontractor are already included in the price mentioned on its invoice);
- The tasks to be subcontracted have to be mentioned in the Annex I of the Grant agreement (DoW, description of work, except for some minor tasks subcontracted during the project's implementation);
- Should you be constrained to call upon subcontractors without having planned it in the DoW, always advice your Project Officer and get his/her written approval.

#### II. Third parties making resources available without carrying out any part of the works:

- These third parties do NOT carry out any part of the works linked to the project, but make resources available; for example a research institution not having signed the GA makes some of its researchers available for the event, they cooperate in the participant(s) premises and under the participant(s) authority;
- These third parties should have been identified in the Annex I of the GA; shouldn't they (for example since they have expressed their interest at a later stage), get the written approval of your Project Officer for involving them;
- Two possibilities:
  - The third party makes resources available and doesn't get any financial compensation by the participant: the costs (which correspond to the financial value of the resources set at disposal, for example the equivalent of the researchers' salary for the period of time considered in the case referred to above) appear in the participants' costs (C form); they also should be recorded in the accounts of the third party in case of audit;

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<sup>1</sup> Example given provided the actual costs are at least equal to the contribution as stipulated in the Grant agreement and without prejudice of interests perceived as explained under the previous item.

- The third party gets a financial compensation by the participant(s): this compensation is considered as a cost incurred by the participant(s) (C form)

### III. Third parties carrying out part of the works linked to the project:

- These third parties do not sign the Grant agreement but carry out a part of the work; they **HAVE** to be identified in the Annex I of the GA (clear identification of the third parties, description of their tasks and of the resources put in for their achievement);
- As such, a special clause (clause 10) will be inserted in the Grant agreement (Identifying the third party, its future tasks and the resources dedicated to their achievement);
- The costs incurred by the third party will be considered eligible under the same rules as those applying to participants (need for validation of the legal entity, rules regarding direct and indirect costs);
- The third party will fill in a C form, which will be presented together with the one of the participant for which it has been carrying out the works, as well as a summary financial report covering expenses of both the participant(s) and the third party;
- Should this kind of third party not have been identified in the DoW and consequently not covered by a special clause in the Grant agreement, and should you however wish to be authorised to take their costs into account, you would have to request for an amendment of the Grant agreement aimed at introducing this special clause referred to above; in all the other cases, the costs incurred by the third party would not be taken into account.

### **Can the project generate receipts and, if yes, how do I deal with such issue?**

"Receipts" of the project can be of different types:

- Financial transfers/contributions in kind to participant(s) from third parties NOT planned in Annex I of the GA (see above about third parties)
- Income generated by the project

#### Financial transfers or contributions in kind from third parties

These transfers/contributions will be considered as receipts of the project if:

- They are allocated to the participant(s) specifically for the project's purpose (example a grant from a public authority explicitly linked to the project will be considered a receipt, while a grant conceded without any mention of a specific activity, thus the use of which is entirely left to the decision of the participant(s) benefiting from it, will not) **AND**
- No compensation is paid by the participant to the third party (example: another institution makes personnel available to participant(s) in the project, specifying that this setting at disposal is intended for the project, and the benefiting participant doesn't pay any compensation therefore).

#### Income generated by the project

This could consist of the payment of an entrance fee, or the commercialisation of some material produced in the framework of the project...

All amounts considered as receipts will have to be declared as such in the C forms of the relevant participant(s) and will be deduced from the total eligible costs used for calculating the remaining amounts to be paid at the end of the project.



## V. EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSALS

### Which proposals will be evaluated?

All the proposals received in response to a call will be submitted to evaluation, except those which would be rejected during the "eligibility check" conducted by REA. This eligibility check only relates to the components of the proposal and the satisfaction of the formal requirements (completeness of the proposal, scope, requirements regarding date, number of participants) and doesn't at all relate to the intrinsic merits of the proposal.

### Who will evaluate the proposals?

Independent experts will evaluate the proposals considered eligible during the evaluation session that will take place from 15 to 19 February 2009. The experts will be selected on the basis of their professional skills and competences, in particular regarding communication of science. Each proposal will be examined by at least 3 experts, each of them elaborating an "individual assessment report" (IAR) on which basis a consensus report, reflecting the views of the three of them, will be established and communicated to the coordinator under the form of an "Evaluation summary report" (ESR) (See further).

### On the basis of which criteria will the proposals be evaluated?

The overall evaluation criteria for Specific Support Actions activities under the specific programme "People" apply, e.g.:

- Scientific and/or technological excellence
- Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management
- Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results.

These criteria will of course be applied according to the objectives and characteristics of the action:

- Scientific and technological excellence: is to be intended as the quality of the communication action aimed at researchers' public recognition;
- Quality and efficiency of the implementation and management: is to be intended as the quality of the overall "architecture" of the action and its management, as well as its likelihood to work well;
- Potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results: is to be intended as the analysis of the potential contribution of the action towards a better public knowledge and understanding of the researchers' role, job and societal contribution.

### What will be the results of the evaluation?

Proposals having obtained at least 3 (out of a maximum of 5) for each of the three criteria referred to above, AND an overall score of at least 10 (out of a maximum of 15) will be considered as having passed the evaluation.

They will be ranked on the basis of the overall score obtained. Should 2 or several proposals have obtained the same overall score, priority will be given to those having obtained the highest score against the "impact "criterion; should the score against the impact criterion be equal, then priority should be given to the proposal(s) having obtained the highest score against the scientific excellence criterion, and in case of equal score also against the scientific excellence criterion, priority will be given to the proposal having obtained the highest score against the "management " criterion.

The "ranked proposals" (those having passed all the evaluation thresholds) will be organised in two lists:

- The so-called "main list" composed of the first ranked proposals of which the total of the contributions requested exhausts the indicative call budget;
- The so-called "reserve list" composed of the proposals ranked lower which will be funded in case the contributions requested for the main list proposals would be reduced (notably through the fine tuning exercise that will have taken place after the deadline for submitting proposals) or in case some proposals would be withdrawn.

## **VI. NEGOTIATION PROCESS**

### **What does happen once evaluation is completed?**

Once the ranked list is established, each coordinator is informed about the results of the evaluation process, through the sending of the "initial information letter" accompanied by the "Evaluation Summary report" (See above under "evaluation of proposals").

By means of the "initial information letter", the coordinator will know whether the evaluation thresholds have been exceeded and which are the possibilities to get EU-funding. In other words, those being on the "main list" will for sure get funded, while there remains a certain level of uncertainty for those being on the "reserve list", although so far it proved possible to fund both main and reserve list projects.

Once the coordinators are all informed and the results of the evaluation officially "blessed" by the Commission, the negotiation process may start.

### **What does the negotiation process consist of?**

The negotiation process aims at taking into account the experts' recommendations and at fine-tuning the programme of activities, which might lead to some budget adjustments. Negotiation will start with the first ranked proposals, which contribution requests represent the available budget ("main list") while the remaining ranked proposals ("reserve list") will be negotiated provided some financial resources would be made available during the negotiation process of the main list.

## VII. EUROPEAN DIMENSION

### How will the European dimension of the event appear towards the public at large?

The European support provided to the project should clearly appear during the awareness campaign and all the promotional material (brochures, leaflets, posters, gadgets...) should be marked with the European flag.

During the event itself, the "European corner", to be set up in the most frequented location by the coordinator, will witness the European dimension of the events. Common visual, informative and promotional material will be provided at European level. The potential attractiveness of the European corner, as well as its contribution to a better public knowledge of the European action in favour of researchers and research, will be taken into account by the independent experts when assessing the proposals against the "impact" criterion.

### May not funded proposals benefit from "logistic support" from the European Commission as it was the case in the frame of the 2005 Researchers in Europe initiative for associated events?

Events not funded may benefit from logistical support (promotional material) and be allowed to use the European "Researchers in Europe" logo provided the mention "associated event" would clearly appear. The "associated event status" will be granted on the basis of the information contained in a form to be filled by the candidates (which will be available on due time on the Researchers' night website). The associated events will be published as such on the European Researchers' night website.

## VIII. TIPS FOR SUCCESS

### What can I do for ensuring the best success opportunities to my proposal and a decision on due time?

- At proposal level:
  - Carefully read the "guide for applicants" and check that all requirements are filled;
  - Do not hesitate to get in touch with the relevant POs when needing further information/explanations;
  - Comply with the page limits mentioned in the guide for applicants and keep to the point without useless lengths;
  - Use a clear and straightforward language, likely to ease the evaluators' job.
- At negotiation level:
  - Take advantage of the delay between evaluation and starting of the negotiation for fine-tuning the programme and the budgetary aspects of your initial proposal;
  - Be prepared to modify some parts of your initial proposal in particular on the basis of the experts recommendations;
  - Quickly react to the requests addressed from EU level.

### How can I avoid the delays resulting from the need for validating the "legal entities" and the bank account?

All legal entities participating in FP 7 need to have a "Participant Identity Code" (PIC). Should you have already taken part in an action under FP 7, then you are already registered and have a PIC, which you will mention in the proposal itself (this allowing an automatic filling in of several items).

Should it be your first participation in FP 7, then, even before knowing whether the proposal will be funded or not, go to

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/appmanager/participants/portal>,

get registered, which will allow you to get a provisional PIC number, and provide the requested documents which will make your registration completed. Having a valid PIC prevents you from filling in all the documents with your coordinates, legal form, authorised representatives etc and eases - also speeding it up- the whole process towards signature of the Grant Agreement.

Should you be the coordinator, make sure that not only you have a valid PIC as explained above, but that the bank account on which you would like to see the EU contribution paid is also validated in the EU database and linked to your institution.

THIS IS LIKELY TO PREVENT FROM DELAYS IN PRODUCING THE GRANT AGREEMENTS, MEANING ALSO DELAYS IN PAYING THE PRE-FINANCING...

### Where can further information about the call be found?

- CORDIS
- [http://ec.europa.eu/research/researchersineurope/events/researchersnight09/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/research/researchersineurope/events/researchersnight09/index_en.htm);
- Marie Curie actions web site: <http://europa.eu.int/mariecurie-actions>
- Contacting Colette Renier, REA, phone +32 2 295 17 69, mail: [colette.renier@ec.europa.eu](mailto:colette.renier@ec.europa.eu) or David Wizel, REA, phone +32 2 295 33 80, mail: [david.wizel@ec.europa.eu](mailto:david.wizel@ec.europa.eu) .