

Advanced Concept Note for Joint Activities of S&T Programme Owners in EU Member States, Associated Countries and Russia

1. Background Information on the Joint Activities and Role of ERA.Net RUS, definitions and role of Funding Parties and Project Consortium

The ERA.Net RUS is an ERA-NET project funded by the European Commission within the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technology Development (FP7). The ERA.Net RUS aims at strengthening the cooperation between the research funding organisations in EU Member States/Associated Countries and Russia and facilitating the coordination of their actions. These goals will be achieved through systematic exchange of information and by developing a sustainable joint funding programme as well as several accompanying measures. The ERA.Net RUS project is targeted at stakeholders at policy and programme level, the research community and industry.

The ERA.Net RUS consortium is comprised of 18 partners from 11 countries. Four of the partners are from Russia. The joint actions initiated by the consortium will be open for all interested research funding organisations in EU Member States/Associated Countries and Russia, also outside the consortium. Central element of the ERA.Net RUS project is to assist interested Programme Owners in EU MS/AC and Russia during the planning and implementation of joint funding activities through a Pilot Joint Call at the beginning of 2011, as well as to conduct an overall assessment of it and on the basis of this evaluation to create a programmatic concept for future joint activities.

This Advanced Concept Note presents various proposals for optional joint funding activities which are considered of particular benefit for Programme Owners.

The Joint Activities will be driven by a Group of Funding Parties that is by Programme Owners from EU MS/AC and Russia, from within and outside the ERA.Net RUS consortium, who agree to participate in the joint call and provide funding for it. Each Programme Owner can decide for itself how large amount of funding to reserve for its share in the joint activities. The Joint Activities should attract the interest of at least six Programme Owners (except for Innovation projects at least four) from both EU MS/AC and Russia to join as Funding Parties. The Group of Funding Parties will be responsible for defining and steering the principles of the Joint Activities including the decision making on the projects to be funded and the provision of respective funds for selected projects partners.

The Funding Parties sign an Implementation Agreement, in which they define, among others:

- funding instruments incl. scope and duration of funding
- thematic focus of the call, if applicable
- eligibility and evaluation criteria
- application, evaluation and decision making procedures
- maximum number of projects intended to be funded
- key elements of the management of funds and reporting.

The Group of Funding Parties will entrust the operational management of the Joint Activities to a Central Administration, which is run by one of the consortium partners. The Central Administration comprises services related to the operational management of the call preparation, to the launch of the call and running an Electronic Call Management System, to the central implementation of the

evaluation and decision making process on projects to be funded, to contract negotiations and to issuing project contracts, to monitoring of projects and to reporting to Funding Parties.

In summary, the ERA.Net RUS project, for its part, facilitates the preparation process and provides and finances the Central Administration for the Joint Activities.

2. Introduction to the Proposed Activities

Three kinds of possible funding instruments (joint activities) are proposed within the programmatic concept as well as a set of additional accompanying measures. The instruments are optional and Programme Owners are invited to contribute to the further definition and preparation process with respect to those instrument(s), that best suits their interests. However, organising a joint activity requires the participation of at least six Programme Owners (except for Innovation projects at least four) from both EU MS/AC and Russia as Funding Parties.

The funding instruments are presented in the matrix below:

Programme Owner	Scientific exchange	Collaborative S&T projects	Innovation projects	(Accompanying measures)
A	X	X		(X)
B		X		(X)
C			X	(X)

3. Description of the Joint Activities

3.1 Horizontal issues

Application procedure

EU-Russian research consortia shall draft a joint project application in English and submit it to the Central Administration of the Joint Activity through a web-based Call Management System. The structure of the application will be specified in the Terms of Reference for each Joint Activity. If required by a Funding Party proposals can also be submitted in parallel to the Central Administration and the respective Funding Party.

Evaluation process

Following a formal eligibility check by the Central Administration to be based on eligibility criteria to be agreed upon by the Group of Funding Parties in the Terms of Reference for the Joint Activity, the selection of the proposals for funding is based on an international, independent peer-review procedure. The evaluation criteria are agreed by the funding parties and defined in the call text. Scientific excellence of the research plan shall always be a key evaluation criterion.

In the first phase of the evaluation, the applications are assessed by independent external scientific experts selected by the Central Administration from a dedicated pool of experts appointed by the Group of Funding Parties. For each eligible application the Central Administration appoints three independent evaluators, of which at least one shall be Russian. In the second phase, a Scientific Advisory Board, consisting of high level scientific experts to be appointed by the Group of Funding Parties, consolidates the results of the evaluation and, on the basis of the evaluation results, ranks the

applications in order of preference and recommends it to the Group of Funding Parties. However, the final funding decisions rest with the Group of Funding Parties.

Funding decisions

Taking into account the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Board, the Group of Funding Parties jointly decides on the final list of projects to be funded.

Procedure and Format of the Grant Agreement

For each project approved for funding the Central Administration executes a standard Grant Agreement to be signed on the one hand by the Central Administration on behalf of the Group of Funding Parties and on the other hand by each Project Partner participating in a Project Consortium selected for funding. Once required by the Funding Parties, it could be foreseen, that in a dedicated section of the Grant Agreement to be signed by a given Project Partner and the respective national Funding Party, the details of the transfer of funds from the Funding Party to the Project Partner will be defined.

The Grant Agreement will set forth the terms and conditions of cooperation in the project, the financial support by each Funding Party, reporting duties and any other rights and obligations between the contractors. The Grant Agreement will include the work programme consisting of the scientific and technical description, the cost table and the time schedule.

The Grant Agreement will include the obligation for multilateral consortia to conclude a Consortium Agreement, which will specify among others principles of handling intellectual property of all Project Partners whenever relevant. A draft model consortium agreement will be provided by the Central Administration to be agreed upon by the Funding Parties. As a rule, knowledge created in a project (foreground) shall be jointly owned by the participants generating it. It is recommended that participants shall grant each other non-exclusive, non-transferable free access to this knowledge for their scientific work in the project. In addition, Project Partners shall agree on appropriate rules for a possible (joint commercial) utilization of this knowledge.

Being part of the Grant Agreement, payments under the project will be arranged by each Funding Party to the respective national beneficiaries.

Management of funds

The Joint Activities are foreseen to be implemented using a coordinated funding scheme whereby each funding party will fund its national beneficiaries within a multilateral project (Principle of “*juste retour*”), with a view to harmonize the funding contributions in order to guarantee the funding of as many as possible of the projects selected through a peer review process. This also means that the funds allocated to the call do not need to be transferred across national borders to the Central Administration. If agreed by the Funding Parties, a different procedure not building on the principle of *juste retour* might be applied to Accompanying Measures.

Reporting procedure by Project Consortia

Each Project Partner within a multilateral Project Consortium will report to the Central Administration building on principles to be agreed upon by the Group of Funding Parties according to each others rules, regulations and practices. The Central Administration will be responsible for the general

financial and technical monitoring of each project. After finalization of a project a summary report needs to be submitted in English to the Central Administration.

Reporting Procedure on Joint Activity

The Central Administration will regularly report on the Joint Activity/ies to the Group of Funding Parties. If applicable, corrective measures will be defined by agreement of the Group of Funding Parties.

Evaluation Process of the Pilot Activity

A monitoring and assessment concept will be developed by the ERA.Net RUS consortium with consultation of the Group of Funding Parties and approval by the Steering Board. It is foreseen to subcontract an external “Monitoring Expert”, who will in close cooperation with the Central Administration develop appropriate monitoring and assessment tools. A concluding meeting of the “Group of Funding Parties” is foreseen to present and discuss the monitoring and assessment report for learning lessons for a sustainable joint programme. Monitoring and assessment shall include at least the appropriateness of the instrument in terms of scientific output and applicability of results and the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative procedures.

3.2 Specific issues

a) Potential Joint Activities on “Scientific exchange”

Objectives of the activity

The scientific exchange instrument is designed to support mobility and networking between European and Russian research teams working during the implementation of high quality collaborative projects.

Funding will be available for:

- 1) mobility actions (short research visits of up to three months, or project related scientific workshops) facilitating international research collaboration between European and Russian teams through the coordination of ongoing S&T projects of each Project Partner, and
- 2) networking actions (short research visits of up to three months, scientific workshops) that support the preparation of joint multinational projects. Particular emphasis should be given to the preparation of joint participation in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

Target group

Networks comprising of teams from universities or non-university research institutions (including the private sector) in EU MS/AC and Russia working on a collaborative research project are eligible for funding. To promote genuine international networking, applications should include partners from at least two EU MS/AC and at least one from Russia.

Length of funding

The funding period is proposed to be up to 24 months for mobility actions and up to 6 months (needs further discussion) for networking actions.

Thematic focus

The subject of the joint call for “Scientific exchange” will be mutually agreed by the Group of Funding Parties.

Several approaches for selecting the topic are possible:

- Focusing on thematic priorities with proven cooperation capacity, such as nanotechnologies/materials, energy, environment/climate change, socio-economic sciences and humanities, ICT, biotechnology,
- Applied research building on strengths of the Russian S&T, e.g. physics, mathematics,
- Trying to stimulate topics currently underrepresented in bilateral S&T cooperation, or
- Focusing on thematic priorities, which are complementary to topics covered by the FP7.

Scope of funding

Eligible costs include:

- Mobility and networking: short research visits to/from EU MS/AC and Russia. Support is provided for travel costs and living expenses, and/or
- Workshops: costs related to organising workshops (travel expenses, accommodation, meeting facilities, materials).

Funding per project partner is 20.000 €maximum.

Structure of the application

Applications need to be submitted electronically to the Central Administration (and once agreed to the respective funding organization).

Information required in the application comprises:

- Information on the project coordinator and the project partners (including CVs, publications)
- Project abstract
- Research plan (clear description of the planned research collaboration including objectives, potential impact, methods of implementation, distribution of work, time plan)
- Once applicable: Relevance of an intended multinational project proposal to funding programmes to be addressed (networking actions, only)
- Description of the added value expected from the collaboration
- Detailed information on budget required for the mobility or networking action

Eligibility criteria for applications

In order to be eligible the applications need to:

- Meet the consortium composition requirements,
- Comply with the allowed duration,
- Comply with the funding requirements,
- Comply with the terms of the submission procedure,
- Be complete,
- Be submitted in the English language and
- Meet the submission deadline.

The final decision on the eligibility criteria rests with the Group of Funding Parties.

Evaluation criteria for applications

The evaluation criteria include:

- Scientific quality and innovativeness of the research plan
- Added value generated by multilateral research collaboration
- Feasibility of the research plan
- Scientific merits and results of the participating researchers/research teams
- Potential significance of the research in improving people's quality of life and for social and economic development
- Once applicable. Relevance to an intended multinational project proposal to funding programmes to be addressed (networking actions, only)
- Support for careers of young researchers.

The final decision on the evaluation criteria rests with the Group of Funding Parties.

2) Potential Joint Activities on “Collaborative S&T projects”**Objectives of the activity**

Within the Collaborative S&T projects instrument the funding parties support systematic S&T collaboration with a thematic focus to be specified in the ToR (see below) of a high standard between research institutions from EU Member States/Associated Countries and Russia is supported through open competition. The goal is to promote networking and create long-term research collaboration between EU MS/AC and Russia in order to solve problems of particular relevance for both regions.

Target group

The funding is targeted to a project consortium consisting of university or non-university research teams and/or private companies. To promote genuine international networking, consortia applying for funding should include partners from at least two EU MS/AC and at least one partner from Russia.

Length of funding

The funding period for each project is up to 24 months.

Thematic focus

The subject of the joint call for Collaborative S&T projects will be mutually agreed by the Group of Funding Parties.

Several approaches for selecting the topic are possible:

- Focusing on thematic priorities with proven cooperation capacity, such as nanotechnologies/materials, energy, environment/climate change, socio-economic sciences and humanities, ICT, biotechnology,
- Applied research building on strengths of the Russian S&T, e.g. physics, mathematics,
- Trying to stimulate topics currently underrepresented in bilateral S&T cooperation, or
- Focusing on thematic priorities, which are complementary to topics covered by the FP7.

Scope of funding

Eligible costs could include:

- Labour costs
- Travel and subsistence (mobility of personnel)
- Costs related to organising seminars and workshops within the project
- Acquisition of material and small-scale research equipment
- Costs for publication, dissemination and patenting
- Indirect costs (communication, administration, renting of facilities etc.)

Projects can be funded with a maximum 65.000€- 100.000 €per project partner. Please note that if the funding party does not cover labour costs, the amount of funding might be considerably smaller.

Structure of the application

Applications need to be submitted electronically to the Central Administration (and to the respective funding organization).

Information required in the application comprises:

- Information on the project coordinator and the project partners (including CVs, publications)
- Project abstract
- Research plan (clear description of the planned scientific work plan, including objectives, potential impact, methods of implementation, distribution of work among partners and time plan)
- Description of the added value expected from the collaboration
- Application potential of project results and approaches towards its utilization
- Detailed information on budget required

Eligibility criteria for applications

In order to be eligible the applications need to:

- Be within scope and thematic focus of the call,
- Meet the consortium composition requirements,
- Comply with the allowed duration,
- Comply with the funding requirements,
- Comply with the terms of the submission procedure,
- Be complete,
- Be submitted in the English language and
- Meet the submission deadline.

The final decision on the eligibility criteria rests with the Group of Funding Parties.

Evaluation criteria for applications

The evaluation criteria include:

- Scientific quality and innovativeness of the research plan
- Added value generated by multilateral research collaboration
- Feasibility of the research plan
- Scientific merits of the participating researchers/research teams

- Potential significance of the research in improving people's quality of life or for social and economic development and resolving global problems (climate change, energy supply, food security etc.)
- Support for careers of young researchers.
- Initiation of new partnerships

The final decision on the evaluation criteria rests with the Group of Funding Parties.

3) Potential Joint Activities on “Innovation projects”

Objectives of the activity

Compared to the rather advanced cooperation between the EU and Russia in the field of basic research, the cooperation in the field of innovation still bears a lot of potential to be exploited. Against this background this measure shall address applied research implemented by EU and/or Russian small and medium sized innovative enterprises or other parts of its innovation infrastructure (technoparks etc.) in partnership with university or non-university public or private institutions.

Target group

Eligible for funding are consortia with a minimum of three institutions such as universities, non-university research institutes and private companies, with at least one partner coming from Russia and two from different EU Member States or Associated Countries to the EU RTD Framework Programme (In justified exceptional cases consortia with a minimum of two institutions with at least one partner coming from Russia and one from an EU Member States or Associated Countries can apply as well). Particular preference should be given to project proposals which consist of three partners from 2 EU MS/AC and one Russian partner and which involve at least one Small Innovative Enterprise from Russia.

Length of funding

The funding period for each project is up to 24 months.

Thematic focus

EU-Russian collaborative projects can be funded in the research areas, which are thematically assigned to innovative technologies of high utilization potential and of particular importance for the EU as well as for Russia, such as:

- New Materials/Nanotechnology,
- Optical Technologies,
- Production Technologies,
- Environmental Technologies,
- Information and Communication Technologies,
- Biotechnology/Medical Technics
- Renewable Energy production.

The final decision on the subject of the call is up to the funding parties.

Scope of funding

Eligible costs include:

- Personnel exchange (travel expenses),
- Salaries of the research staff,
- Project related workshops, marketing activities of project results (participation in international technology fairs)
- Services of third parties in the field of R&D,
- Project related consumables and small-scale research equipment,
- Indirect costs (communication, administration, renting of facilities etc.)

It should be noted, that according to EU-regulations private companies need to cover at least 50% (for SMEs 40%) of the total project related expenditures. The same applies to Russian participants in the call.

Projects might be funded with a maximum of 100.000-150.000 per project partner.

Structure of the application

Applications need to be submitted electronically to the Central Administration (and to the respective funding organization).

Information required comprises:

- Information on the project coordinator and the project partners
- Project abstract
- Detailed information on budget required
- Research plan (clear description of the planned scientific work plan, including objectives, potential impact, methods of implementation, distribution of work among partners and time plan)
- Approach towards utilization of projects results
- Approach to share IP among partners

Eligibility criteria for applications

- Be in the scope and in the thematic focus of the call
- Meet the consortium composition requirements
- Comply with the allowed duration
- Comply with the funding requirements
- Comply with the terms of the submission procedure
- Be complete
- Be submitted in the English language
- Meet the submission deadline

Evaluation criteria for applications

- Scientific quality and innovativeness of the research plan
- Added value generated by multilateral research collaboration
- Feasibility of the research plan
- Scientific merits of the participating researchers/research teams
- Potential significance of the research in improving people's quality of life or for social and economic development and resolving global problems (climate change, energy supply, food security etc.)

- Innovation potential
- Appropriate handling of IP
- (Support for careers of young researchers).

4) Potential Joint Activities on “Accompanying measures”

Objectives of the activity

With a view to enhance the general framework for EU-Russia S&T cooperation including the effective implementation of joint funding activities as described above, some dedicated *Accompanying Measures* are proposed.

The objectives of these measures are:

- a) Enabling the formation of scientific networking and disseminating information on joint funding opportunities,
- b) Increasing networking between projects and raising management skills of EU and Russian scientists to better collaborate in trans-national networks
- c) Raising knowledge and fostering networking between young scientists.

Possible measures

For (a)

Promotion of the call and brokerage events:

Three thematic conferences (65 participants each) to promote the Pilot Joint Call and allow for brokerage activities among the science and innovation communities in the home countries of the „Group of Funding Parties“ in close cooperation with the members of the „Group“ (two in Russia out of which one will be held in Siberia and one in Budapest). Selection procedure of experts from science and innovation community will be made by the organizers of the event as well as the reimbursement of travel costs, except for additional participants which will be chosen and financed by respective national Programme Owners/Funding Parties.

For (b)

Two workshops (one in Russia and one in Turkey) for Project Partners in Project Consortia funded under possible Joint Activities 1-3 in order to share experiences and coordinate framework conditions:

- 1) Status seminar of funded projects in the end of the project lifetime which also serves the evaluation of the funding measure
- 2) Training for project participants/ research managers in order to raise their management skills in international S&T cooperation and regarding the management of Intellectual Property Rights in international projects.

Application and logistical support will be made through the joint call secretariat.

For (c)

Building up human capacities:

Implementation of international summer schools for young scientists

Call for proposals will be made as part of Activity 1 or 2, which will be centrally implemented by the Central Administration.

Target groupfor (a):

Scientist working in one of the thematic priorities of the activities 1-3 representing universities, public research centres as well as industries from Russia and EU-Member States /Associated Countries. They have to be represented by at least one Programme Owner in the Group of Funding Parties.

for (b):

Scientists and research managers involved in the joint projects funded in the activities 1-3 will be eligible for participation in the events.

for (c):

Scientific institutions in Russia, which are capable to host a summer school in partnership with at least one scientific institution in an EU Member State/Associated Country.

Length of funding

Additional funding will only be provided for (c) for a period of up to 9 month including the preparation and implementation of the Summer School.

Thematic focus

According to the thematic focus of activities 1-3.

Scope of Fundingfor (a):

For participants travel expenses and accommodation will be covered partially out of the ERA.Net RUS budget (for the two thematic conferences in Russia 35 participants from the EU and 10 from Russia, for the workshop in Budapest 35 from the EU and 20 from Russia). Once the interest of the science community exceeds the funds available through ERA.Net RUS participants will be reimbursed by their national member of the *Group of Funding Parties* according to respective funds available; The host institution (member of ERA.Net RUS project consortium) will receive funds for organisational expenses incl. personnel, meeting facilities, catering, communication costs etc. out of the ERA.Net RUS budget.

for (b):

30 participants are foreseen for each workshop. Covered resources from the project budget include for the workshop in Russia: Travel/ accommodation for EU experts to Russia: 15. Travel/ accommodation for Russian experts within Russia: 5. For the workshop in Turkey: Travel/ accommodation for EU experts: 15. Travel/ accommodation for Russian experts to Turkey: 10. Costs for inviting a limited number of external experts (such as IP-experts) could be covered out of the ERA.Net RUS budget. Once the interest exceeds the funds available through ERA.Net RUS participants will be reimbursed by their national member of the *Group of Funding Parties* according to respective funds available.

for (c):

For the hosting institutions of summer schools eligible costs include

- organisational expenses (personnel, communication costs, printing costs, meeting facilities, travel expenses, ...)
- travel and accommodation for external lecturers/instructors
- travel and accommodation for participation of young scientists
- catering

Each Summer School might be funded with a maximum of 60.000 € per activity (accompanying measure).

Structure of the application

for (a):

Proposals will be submitted by individuals who intend to participate in the thematic conferences that would allow for brokerage activities.

- Profile of the institution and individual expertise
- Brief ideas of collaborative projects incl. expected outcome
- Expected partner profiles/expertise to complement own profile
- Expected benefit from cooperation
- Breakdown of costs

for (b):

No formal application foreseen. Participants of the events will be nominated by individual project coordinators of the projects funded in the call.

for (c):

Proposals will be submitted by the hosting institution on behalf of the project consortium.

- Information on the project coordinator and the partner(s)
- Theme(s) abstract
- Proposed Curriculum (list and explanation of lectures, workshops and other kinds of proposed activities)
- Objectives, target community
- Information about instructors
- Potential Impact
- Time Plan
- Distribution of Work among project partners
- Breakdown of costs

Eligibility criteria for applications

for (a):

- Be in the scope and in the thematic focus of the call
- Comply with the terms of the submission procedure
- Be complete
- Be submitted in the English language
- Meet the submission deadline

for (b)

not applicable

for (c):

- Be in the scope and in the thematic focus of the call
- Comply with the allowed duration
- Comply with the funding requirements
- Young scientists (Ph.D. level) as target group
- Comply with the terms of the submission procedure
- Be complete

- Be submitted in English language
- Meet the submission deadline

Evaluation criteria for applications

for (a):

- Relevance to the thematic priorities specified in the call
- Quality of the institution to be represented and of the individual scientific profile
- Quality and originality of first idea for project proposals
- Relevance of expected outcome of proposed collaborative projects
- Matching to other participants' profile.

for (b)

not applicable

for (c):

- Relevance to the thematic priorities specified in the call and conformance with the specified formal requirements
- Qualifications of the hosting institution and the project partners involved
- Quality and accessibility of the summer school facilities
- Scientific and methodological quality and originality of the curriculum and instructors
- Initiation of new partnerships between young scientists from Russia and EU
- Quality of cooperation between the project partners