European Research Funding

- James Davenport — EU funding since 1986; technical manager one project, chair of two projects and a network; coordinator of one network.

- Anna Beria — project administrator of two projects.

* Experience in Information Society Technologies (IST), but most of the rules and lessons are the same across "Framework" programmes.

- Hazel Wallis/Janet Westell — Research Office.

The EU is different

- It has an explicit agenda — you will only be funded if you fit into their agenda;
- The bureaucracy is different — the forms look longer but there is more automated help;
- What they will fund is different, and sometimes more flexible than EPSRC etc.
- The EU looks at the institutions it funds, as well as the individuals.
- The EU has an explicit target (15%) to support Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

What is the EU's agenda?
Framework 6

1. Focusing and Integrating Community Research: €13,345M

2. Strengthening the Foundations of the European Research Area (ERA): €330M

3. Structuring the European Research Area: €2,655M

The new methods are also intended to "minimise the paperwork and overheads involved in negotiation and to speed up the procedures, in order to improve a time-to-contract average which currently stands at more than seven months."

What does that mean in English?

1. Research: €13,345M

   - Targeted research projects and thematic networks as before, but being phased out;

   - Integrated Projects: 40 institutions (but probably built round a core of 10), budget €20M (10M from EU), 3–5 years

   - Networks of Excellence: €3M from EU, 3–5 years, can include PhD funding.

2. Strengthening ERA: €320M

   - Coordination of Research Activities

   - Development of Research/Innovation Policies

3. Structuring ERA: €2,605M

   - Research and Innovation: €290M

   - Human Resources and Mobility — Marie Curie Fellowships (much wider categories than before): €1,580M

   - Research Infrastructures: €655M

   - Science and Society: €80M

The "European Research Area" is Brussels' fear that the USA does better than Europe because it has greater mobility of researchers and ideas, and fewer barriers.

The Seven Thematic Priorities: €11,285M

1. Genomics/biotechnology for health: €2,255M
2. Information Society Technologies: €3,625M
3. Nanotechnologies and Nanoscience: €1,300M
4. Aeronautics & Space: €1,075M
5. Food quality and safety: €685M
6. Sustainable Development: €2,120M
7. Citizens and Governance: €225M

So how do I get my hands on it?

You need the following:

- The documentation (`http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/eoi-instruments`) — also `http://www.ukro.ac.uk/subs/era_fp6/FP6/FP6%20Tutorial/Index.htm`

- A consortium

- A topic that fits into *one* of their themes/ sub-themes (must have a single major theme)

- A convincing story why the EU should fund it (as opposed to national bodies)

- A plan — depending on what mechanism

- A budget — allow for management costs

The consortium

- The right size and structure for the type of support you are bidding for

- Participating Countries: EU–15 and Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia & Slovenia. Some input here, especially from those about to join, is useful

- Some SME input is useful (but not to co-ordinate unless they have a track record)

- Some evidence that the consortium members can work together (bilateral funding, e.g. British Council; past staff visits etc.)

- It takes time to put a consortium together

- Be wary of including members “just for the sake of it”, especially in projects

The EU does not want to fund your research.

Instead, it wants to assist in improving your research by giving it a European dimension, in the hope that this will create a critical mass that cannot be achieved on a national basis.

You need to convince the EU that your project does this.

- The consortium

- Distinct rôles for members

- Comparisons with the U.S.

The plan

In the past, particularly for projects, these had to be very detailed, with a list of deliverables etc.

It looks as though the new mechanisms wil be more flexible (quite how much is still up for grabs). However:

- Always include a dissemination plan
- Split into work packages
- Appoint sites as work package co-ordinators (this also saves a lot of grief later)
- Coordinating partner must have a track record

What can I ask for

- Travel inside participating states
- Travel outside (need EU permission *in advance*: best if written into plan)
- Research officers (Projects)
- Coordination costs (e.g. 10% of JHD, 20% of AB for a 14-partner network)
- Equipment depreciation (over 3 or 5 years)
- Other costs
- 20% overheads

And in the future

- Research students
- Research Offices (Networks of Excellence)
- Substitute teaching costs
- Possibly, buildings to house equipment

Guesses at a Timetable

7 June 2002 Deadline for expressions of interest for Networks of Excellence and Integrated Projects: not compulsory.

Dec. 2002 First call for proposals under Framework 6.

March 2003 Likely closing date for first call.

June 2003 Projects start — I'll believe it when I see it.