ERA-NET Cofund

0. HISTORY ERA-NET Cofund

Established as an instrument under the 6th Framework Programme (2002-2006), the goal of ERA-NETs is to promote cooperation among scientific research funding agencies (programme owners (and managers), ministries and/or research institutes (as program managers) of European Union member-states as well as associated and third countries. As such, ERA-NETs aim at reversing on going fragmentation and fostering transnational collaboration among researchers.
The ERA-NET scheme under the 6th Framework Programme only addressed programme managers and / or -owners and welcomed proposals for coordination actions in several R&D fields using a bottom-up approach. The Commission paid additional costs related to the coordination up to 100%.

Framework Programme 7 supported existing ERA-NET actions to extend and/or reinforce their integration while it also supported new ERA-NET actions.
The instrument is called ERA-NET Plus under which the Commission supported the organisation of joint calls between national research programmes by "topping-up" joint trans-national funding with Community funding.
ERA-NETs Plus differ from traditional ERA-NETs in the following aspect: under such scheme with transnational calls the European Commission provides a topping up to 33% in addition to national funding.

In H2020 a new tool was introduced, called **ERA-NET Cofund**

1. WHAT IS IT (ABOUT)

ERA-NET Cofund is based on the merger of the ERANET scheme and ERA-NET Plus actions.
ERA-NET Cofund is designed to support public-public partnerships, including joint programming initiatives between Member States
The main and compulsory activity of the ERA-NET Cofund is the implementation of the co-funded joint call for proposals that leads to the funding of trans-national research and/or innovation projects. This aims to increase the leverage on public funding of joint research and innovation agendas. It also indicates a shift from funding networks to top-up funding of joint calls.

The participation of programme managers including governmental research organisations has to be mandated by the national/regional authorities in charge (normally the responsible Ministry).
The total duration of the action should normally not exceed 5 years.
ERA-NET Cofund actions are funded in all parts of Horizon 2020.

2. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Participants in ERA-NET Cofund actions are:

1) programme owners: typically national/regional ministries/authorities responsible for defining, financing or managing research programmes carried out at national or regional level
2) programme 'managers': typically research councils or funding agencies or other national or regional organisations that implement research programmes under the supervision of the programme owners
3) research funders: legal entities owning or managing public research and innovation programmes
4) research institutions working in the field of the ERA-NET Cofund and who can become partners with in kind participation.

Number of participants needed:
At least three legal entities. Each of the three shall be established in a different Member State or associated country. All three legal entities shall be independent of each other.

3. WHY PARTICIPATE (return)?

- (+) ERA-NET Cofunds foster cooperation with international partners in common and flexible initiatives and generate additional funds for the research activities of the organisation
- (+) Visibility of your organisation.
- (+) Your organisation has to finance 66%, but the EC will reimburse a maximum of 33% of the total eligible costs of the action. The EC will also provide you with an advance payment to start working in the action.
- (+) The proposals from the joint calls will be evaluated in an international peer review.
- (+)You decide in an European team about the research themes for now and the future.

- (-) The fragmentation in the different instances of Belgium and the fact that not all instances support necessarily the same themes within a same ERA, building up consortia with Belgian partners is rendered difficult.
- (-) In terms of level of funding for the federal part, high funding level countries do not always want Belgium on board due to the fact that the Belgian budget available for ERA is not as high as countries like Germany and France. Belgium blocks the other countries because if they are member of the planned consortium without more funds, the projects will not be financed.

4. HOW TO APPLY?

ERA-NET Cofunds will be published in the H2020 calls for proposals via the EC Participant Portal: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html

Two possibilities to find these calls:

(1) You use the search option from the Participant Portal to find the open 'Eranet' calls: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/index.html

(2) You go directly in the open 'Eranet' calls from a specific theme:
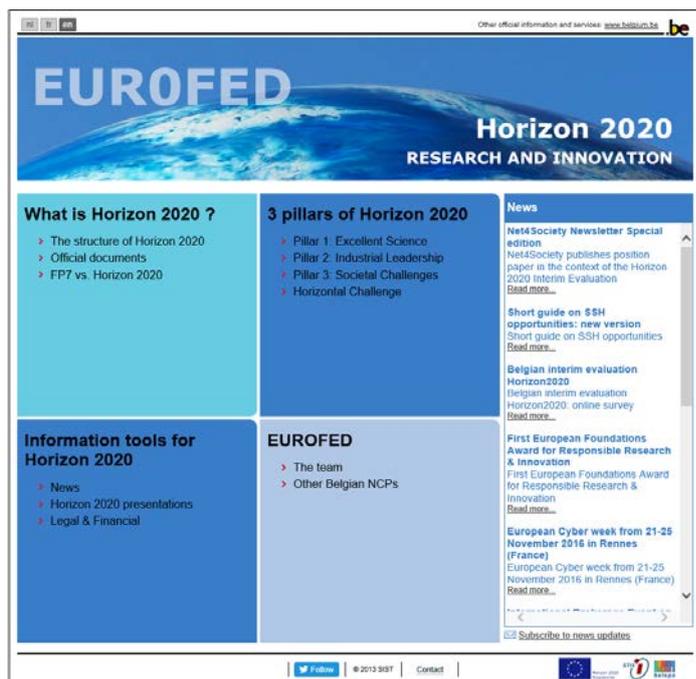
5. WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION AND HELP?

Belgian federal level: Eurofed

EUROFED is the service of the National Contact Points (NCPs) of the Belgian federal government.

Eurofed website: http://eurofed.stis.belspo.be/

Eurofed contacts:

- Laurent Ghys (laurent.ghys@stis.belspo.be),

- Pascale Van Dinter (pascale.vandinter@stis.belspo.be) and

- Marieke Zwartjes (marieke.zwartjes@belspo.be)

European/International level:

Participant portal: http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/home.html
Model Grant Agreement of ERA-NET Cofund (📄 1.76 MB)
General Annex of the Work Programme on ERA-NET Cofund (📄 154 KB)
Template for the proposal preparation: (📄 930 KB)

ERA NET Scheme website: http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/era-net_en.htm

Era-learn 2020 website: Horizon2020 calls: https://www.era-learn.eu/h2020-calls-for-p2p/calls-2017

Era-learn 2020 website: ERA-NET Cofund Guidelines & Practical Documentation: https://www.era-learn.eu/manuals-tools/p2p-in-h2020/practical-documentation