

Call for EUROCORES Themes 2010

About EUROCORES

The EUROCORES (European Collaborative Research) scheme offers a unique framework for the establishment of new collaborative research programmes with international scale and scope.

The ideas for new EUROCORES programmes are elicited from the scientific community through this annual open call for theme proposals. A small number of the submitted themes are selected through peer review for development into new programmes, which then launch their respective Calls for Collaborative Research Project (CRP) proposals.

The ensuing project selection phase, through a two-stage international peer review, produces a number of successful CRPs which together form a EUROCORES programme. Each CRP contains at least three Individual Projects in three different countries. A successful Individual Project is financed directly from a participating research funding or research performing organisation; project funding typically includes support for research positions, travel, dissemination, equipment, etc. Additional financial and coordination support is available to a programme for enabling networking activities among the funded CRPs.

Why EUROCORES?

The scheme allows the scientific community to identify the topics they believe need to be addressed on an international level. Successful programmes then allow the best researchers in the participating countries in Europe to collaborate across geographical, disciplinary and cultural borders, and also when appropriate, to cooperate with scientists from non-European countries.

The added value of the EUROCORES scheme is in its strong focus on creating synergies and integration of effort through networking between newly funded collaborative projects.

Funding decisions on the projects remain at the level of the participating national research funding/performing organisations, based on an international peer review coordinated by the ESF. The participating organisations also support the networking, dissemination and coordination costs of the scheme.

For further information see:
<http://www.esf.org/eurocores>

The European Science Foundation (ESF) contributes to the development of the European Research Area through its European Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) scheme, supporting multinational, interdisciplinary collaborative research programmes across Europe and beyond.

The ESF hereby invites leading researchers in all scientific domains to submit a proposal in its 2010 annual Call for EUROCORES Themes.

Five or six of the submitted theme proposals will be selected for further development into new collaborative research programmes. Successful themes will lead to a Call for Collaborative Research Project proposals around December 2010.

What is a EUROCORES theme?

EUROCORES themes are proposals for new thematic research programmes dealing with broad and complex topics which are best addressed in multinational collaboration. Theme proposals are NOT research proposals, but rather the first step towards the creation of large-scale multinational collaborative research (EUROCORES) programmes.

How does EUROCORES work?

There are three main phases in the life of a typical EUROCORES programme (see Figure 1 on page 2):

- Phase 1: Theme selection
- Phase 2: Project selection
- Phase 3: Research, networking and dissemination

The current Call for theme proposals marks the beginning of Phase 1, inviting new ideas which, if successful, will advance to Phase 2. *Theme proposals therefore form the basis of a subsequent call for research proposals which will be launched for each of the successful programmes.*

Phase 2 begins with a call for research proposals. During Phase 2, Collaborative Research Projects (CRPs) will be selected through a two-stage international peer review process.

Successful CRPs will undertake their collaborative research, networking and dissemination activities during Phase 3.

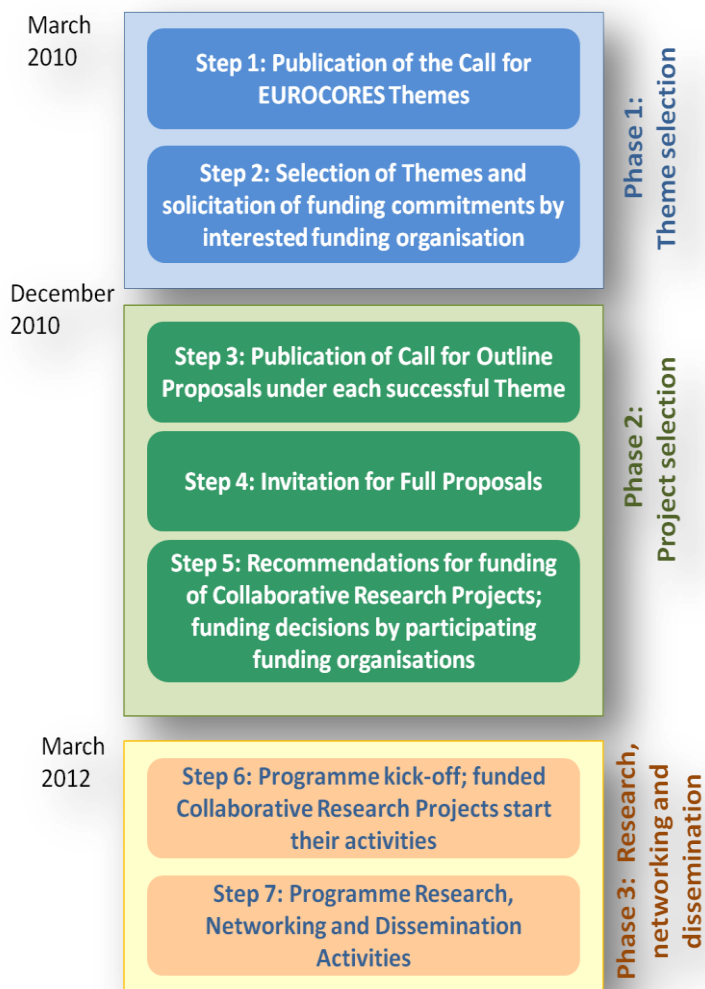


Figure 1: Complete life-cycle of EUROCORES

Some indicative figures

EUROCORES programmes typically:

- Involve a community of at least 20 research groups;
- Have the support of at about 10 funding organisations;
- Attract a total research funding of 3-10 million Euros over 3-4 years of research;
- Contain at least 3 funded Collaborative Research Projects (CRPs), with each CRP having 3-7 Individual Projects.

The research phase of a EUROCORES programme typically kicks off about 15-16 months after the publishing of Call for Outline Proposals.

Eligibility criteria

Teams of proposers must include scientists eligible for funding from ESF member organisations in at least four different countries. For ESF membership please visit: <http://www.esf.org/about-us/>.

Themes can span all fields of science within the remit of the ESF's Standing Committees: Humanities (including cognitive sciences); Physical and Engineering sciences (including mathematics, computing, chemistry, materials science and information technology); Medical Sciences; Social Sciences; Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences.

Please note that:

- Proposers of a successful EUROCORES theme may, along with all other active researchers in the field, submit proposals under the resulting Call for research proposals, *if they are eligible to receive research funding from one of the participating funding organisations*. Other researchers can be involved in the CRPs as Associated Partners without receiving research and networking support under the programme.
- If theme proposers do not submit research proposals, they may be invited to serve on the International Review Panel that will be assigned to the programme.
- Theme proposers from ESF member countries who hope to submit research proposals under a resulting Call for Proposals may wish to consult the relevant funding organisation in their country of affiliation to explore the potential level of support for their theme. Scientists from outside ESF membership are requested to consult their funding organisation (particularly NSF) to ensure the conditions for their full participation and funding in a potential future programme.

Note: EUROCORES Theme proposals are NOT proposals for research projects. Rather, they form the basis for the creation of a thematic collaborative research programme.

Theme assessment criteria

- 1. Scientific quality, novelty and potential for scientific impact including:**
 - Convincing scientific case
 - Potential to generate original and innovative ideas, approaches and cutting-edge research
 - Potential for scientific and broader impacts
 - Cohesion and synergy between programme elements
 - Potential for inter- and multidisciplinary approaches
 - Realistic and achievable objectives
- 2. Requirement for European Collaboration including:**
 - Need to conduct the programme at a European level
 - Potential to strengthen or advance Europe's scientific profile or position in the world
 - Potential to involve non-European researchers
- 3. Relation to other ongoing/planned research initiatives in the field (national, European, international), including:**
 - Complementarity with ongoing/planned initiatives, especially with EC-funded/planned programmes
 - Non-duplication of prior or existing funding
- 4. Relevant scientific community:**
 - Critical mass of excellent researchers in the relevant disciplines in Europe, as evidenced by the list of potentially interested scientists (size, expertise and geographical distribution of scientific community)
 - Appropriateness of the identified target groups (and justification for the omission of any leading groups) from the relevant science communities in the field
 - If appropriate, coverage of non-European experts
- 5. Ethical and legal issues, including:**
 - Identification of any major ethical and legal issues that would require particular attention
 - Identification of any major ethical and legal issues that could become obstacles to the full development of the programme.

How to submit a theme proposal

EUROCORES theme proposals are submitted online and must be received by **21 May 2010** (noon CET) via the online application form at:

<http://www.esf.org/activities/eurocores/calls.html>

The first part of the theme proposal is completed online at the address above and the template for Part 2 of the proposal can be downloaded there. The template for Part 2 can also be downloaded from the EUROCORES main web page at: <http://www.esf.org/eurocores>



Please also consult the EUROCORES Glossary, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and guidelines for online submission of EUROCORES themes at
<http://www.esf.org/eurocores>

Examples of previous successful themes (i.e. those which have been developed into EUROCORES programmes) can be found on the ESF website under the individual programme pages, which can be accessed from:
<http://www.esf.org/eurocores>

Theme proposal structure

PART 1: Key information

The following information will be entered directly into an online form:

- **Title of the EUROCORES theme proposal** (including an acronym of preferably 3-10 characters)
- **Abstract** (max. 300 words)
- **Keywords** (max. eight keywords, separated by a semicolon)
- **Scientific domain** into which the proposal falls, from a given list of options (multidisciplinary proposals can be assigned to up to 3 domains)
- **List of proposers:** Normally 4-10 scientists and/or representatives of national funding organisations from at least four different countries within ESF membership), with personal details of each:
 - Title, surname, first name, full affiliation (department/centre, institution), complete address, telephone number, e-mail address

PART 2: Draft call for research proposals

Part 2 of the theme proposal takes the form of a Call for research proposals and will be uploaded in a separate document (in doc or pdf format). You must use the template available to download from the online application page and complete it in a standard font such as Times New Roman 12 or Arial 10.

IMPORTANT: *Should your theme proposal be successful, the resulting Call for Collaborative Research Proposals will be drafted on the basis of Part 2 of your theme proposal. The proposal should therefore be conceptually fully developed and linguistically of a high standard.*

SECTION A: Draft call for research proposals (max. 10 pages)

The Call for Proposals should make a compelling case for the creation of a new multinational collaborative research programme on the proposed theme. Make sure to substantiate your arguments. Please also consider the assessment criteria on page 2.

1) Introduction: scientific rationale and background

- Overview of the state-of-the-art
- Need for and timeliness of a European-level, multidisciplinary collaborative research programme on this topic (and specifically, why EUROCORES).
- Potential for cutting-edge research and innovation.

2) Scientific objectives and goals

- Broad objectives, specific goals, expected outcomes and potential impacts (scientific and broader), in the short and long term.
- Major milestones during the three years of the programme.

3) Research topics

- Main research topics and sub-topics (including their relative priorities in the programme, if appropriate).
- Cross-cutting themes or dimensions.

4) Potential for synergy and networking between programme elements

- Coherence of the suggested programme elements and potential for integration, cross-fertilisation and synergy between Collaborative Research Projects.
- Identification of any specific needs and opportunities in addition to the normal networking activities, such as key events anticipated at the programme level, connection to other programmes and initiatives, opportunities for co-sponsorship of such events etc.
- Potential for involvement of researchers outside Europe.

5) Programme structure (if relevant)

- Recommendations on the possible composition and scope of the Collaborative Research Projects (CRPs) in the programme, e.g. if applicable optimal number of Individual Projects within a CRP, duration of projects on certain topics, requirement on coverage of the topics, etc.,

6) Relation to other ongoing/planned initiatives

- Overview of relevant ongoing or planned national, European and international initiatives.
- Degree of complementarity and continuity in relation to past, ongoing and planned funding initiatives.
- Potential for collaboration and synergy with other such initiatives.
- Risk of duplication of funding at European level.

7) Need for infrastructure and special requirements (if applicable)

- Justification for specific support from the national funding agencies for infrastructure and facilities (e.g. for items such as fieldwork, major equipment, ship-time, or any other Infrastructure and facilities access).

8) Ethical and legal issues

- Ethical or legal issues, especially in relation to national and European norms, standards and regulations, that would need to be considered in the proposed programme, and suggestions on how to deal with any such issues.

SECTION B: Appendices (max. 2 pages)

- i. List of the 15 most relevant institutes and eminent scientists active in this field (may include proposers if appropriate).
- ii. List of scientists and institutions that might be interested in participating in this programme, including the proposers. The list should be organised first by country, and then in alphabetical order. Each entry should contain only the following: Title and full name; full affiliation (department/centre, institution), indicating disciplinary areas.

The selection procedure

Important: the eventual launch of a programme will depend first on the scientific evaluation and recommendation to form the programme, but also on a financial viability check performed after ESF member organisations have pledged their financial commitment to the recommended themes.

1 March 2010:

- Launch of Call for EUROCORES themes.

21 May 2010 (midday CET):

- Deadline for submission of EUROCORES Theme proposals.

By end May 2010:

- Eligibility check – negative decisions will be communicated to the applicants.

1 June – July 2010:

- International peer review – at least three reviews will be sought for each theme proposal.

Week 32 (9-16 August) 2010:

- Proposers will have the possibility to respond to the written reviews, which will be provided to them by an email link. **Lead proposers should make sure that they have email access during this period.**

Beginning of October 2010:

- Following recommendations from the ESF's relevant Standing Committee(s) and Scientific Advisory Board, ESF Governing Council approves the launch of 5 or 6 themes for further development into programmes.
- ESF informs proposers and national funding organisations.

Mid-October 2010:

- Proposers of the selected themes will be asked to finalise the Call for Proposals with the support of the ESF Office. Proposers should be aware that this might require a short meeting or a telephone conference during the week 11-15 October 2010.

October 2010 – December 2010:

- ESF will seek formal funding commitment from interested national research funding organisations for each of the approved EUROCORES programmes.

Mid-December 2010/January 2011:

- If a sufficient level of national funding support is committed to a proposed programme, an open "Call for Outline Proposals" will be launched.

For successful themes

Once the Calls for Outline Proposals have been launched:

Project selection and funding

- ESF establishes an independent international Review Panel for each EUROCORES programme, based on recommendations from the participating organisations and endorsed by the ESF's Science Advisory Board.
- Each Review Panel makes a selection of the best Outline Proposals based on the following assessment criteria:
 - Relevance to the Call
 - Novelty and originality (including scientific quality)
 - Added value of the collaboration (for Europe)
 - Qualification of the applicants
- ESF invites the proposers of the selected Outline Proposals to submit Full Proposals.
- ESF conducts an international peer review process, culminating in a ranking of the best Full Proposals submitted.
- The rank order of the proposals as well as the available research funding in the programme will determine the final make-up of the funded Collaborative Research Projects (CRPs) in the programme.

Research and networking phase

ESF establishes the governance structure for the EUROCORES Programme. This includes:

- **A Scientific Committee**
 - Consisting of the Project Leaders of funded CRPs;
 - Responsible for the scientific steering and coordination of the programme, including the networking policy and networking work plan;
 - Reporting to the Management Committee.
- **A Management Committee**
 - Consisting of representatives of the participating funding organisations;
 - Responsible for the overall decision-making and management of the programme in accordance with the guidelines of the EUROCORES scheme.
- **An ESF Programme Coordinator**
 - Responsible for the coordination of the programme;
 - Facilitating networking between the funded projects within and, if appropriate, across various EUROCORES programmes and other relevant initiatives;
 - Liaising between the Scientific Committee and Management Committee.

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For more information on the EUROCORES scheme and on existing EUROCORES programmes please consult the ESF website at: www.esf.org/eurocores



Please also consult the EUROCORES Glossary, FAQ and Guidelines for online submission of EUROCORES themes at www.esf.org/eurocores

The research funding as well as the networking dissemination and coordination costs of all the EUROCORES programmes are borne by the participating national funding organisations.

March 2010
