

SEE-ERA.NET Pilot Joint Call

for Research and Thematic Network Projects as well as Summer Schools
in/with the Western Balkan Region

1. Background and objectives

The ERA-NET scheme is an innovative component of the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme addressing national or regional research funding or managing bodies. Its intention is to improve the co-operation and co-ordination of national research activities and thus strengthen the European Research Area (ERA).

Supported under the ERA-Net scheme, the SEE-ERA.NET began its work in September 2004. SEE-ERA.NET aims at structuring and expanding the ERA to the West Balkan countries (WBC) by co-ordinating and supporting RTD activities so far conducted preferably at bilateral level. SEE-ERA.NET is trying to develop a systemic approach to joint activities, such as combining policy development, capacity building, infrastructure development, brokerage and networking activities, ending up with joint research projects.

In order to establish a first pilot case of a *Joint Call*, the SEE-ERA.NET Steering Board has decided to create a new multilateral funding programme within the context of the SEE-ERA.NET network.

All 14 countries in the SEE-ERA.NET project have declared that they will participate with national financial contributions to this first pilot joint call: ALBANIA, AUSTRIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, BULGARIA, CROATIA, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO, ROMANIA, SLOVENIA, SERBIA.

2. What kind of projects will be funded?

The **SEE-ERA.NET Pilot Joint Call** focuses on specific thematic areas:

- **Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology:** sub area "*Sustainable production and management of biological resources from land, forest and aquatic environments*"
- **Information and Communication Technologies:** sub area "*Applications Research*"

- **Environment:** sub area “*Environmental Technologies*”

Applications can be submitted for:

2.1. Research projects

These projects shall be conducted by a project consortium with at least three participants from three different countries and at least one of them must be from a Western Balkan country.

Applications should be submitted for small and short term multilateral research projects and short preparatory activities such as feasibility studies or pilot investigations with a duration of up to 9 months including exchange of scientists in order to prepare bigger and longer future research projects.

2.2. Network projects

The thematic network projects are preferably aiming at the co-ordination and co-operation of scientists in one specific scientific area based on mutual visits and small Workshops.

This specific type of projects shall be conducted by at least five partners from three different countries of which two from Western Balkan countries are mandatory.

The docking of scientific institutions/teams to existing networks and existing and ongoing R&D projects (i.e. linking up teams of young researchers to already existing successful multilateral projects or institutional networks) will be possible. Research and network projects might start in September 2007 with a duration of up to nine months.

2.3. Summer Schools

Summer Schools should be organised by a project consortium consisting of at least three participants from three different countries; among them at least one from a Western Balkan country.

3. Who is funded?

Applications for project funding may be submitted by legal RTD entities eligible according to the national regulations of the participating countries (see 1.). This funding scheme targets at institutional collaboration: legal private persons may not apply.

4. What does the funding cover?

The *National Funding Bodies*¹ of the countries eligible for this call (see 1.) will promote the projects by providing non-repayable grants. Expenditures have to be actual, economic and necessary. Mainly expenses for mobility of researchers will be covered².

In addition, expenditure for the following types is eligible for grants, if justified by the nature of the project:

- staff for the implementation of events and investigations of feasibility
- cost of events and meetings, e.g. rental of venue, logistics
- physical resources, e.g. consumables, printing costs, small equipment, etc.

Indicative budget per project will be up to 20.000 € for a period of maximum 9 months.

5. How to submit applications

Applications should describe in as much detail as possible the objectives and the measures of the intended project.

As the application will be completely based on electronic submission, please see the following website for a detailed description of the application process and the necessary forms:

<http://www.see-era.net/pjc>

5.1. Deadline for application

Application submission is possible until March 31, 2007.

6. Decision-making procedure

The submission of an application does not establish a legal claim for funding.

6.1. Assessment process and assessment criteria

The assessment procedures of the review system will be transparent, fair and dedicated to scientific excellence. Assessment of proposals will be carried out as an international peer review process. The final approval of a project will be made by a committee representing Ministries and/or agencies from all participating SEE-ERA.NET members.

¹ This is the respective Ministry or agency acting on behalf of the responsible Ministry for a specific country.

² For Romania **only mobility expenditures** can be covered.

Applications will be considered on the basis of the following criteria:

- Scientific quality of the work plan (relevance, originality). – A special weight will be applied to this criterion. –
- Innovative potential of the expected project results or networking or docking activities for future utilisation or co-operation
- International competitiveness of participating research groups in the field(s) of the proposal
- Feasibility of the project (appropriateness of the methodology, budget and timetable)
- Level of collaborative interaction between the groups and added value of the consortium
- Training aspects, if applicable
- Involvement of young scientists
- Sustainability
- Regional co-operation among the West Balkan Countries
- Southeast European capacity building
- “Brain Gain” and re-integration measures for mobile scientists from the Western Balkan Countries

7. Further information and counselling

Further information is available from your **national SEE-ERA.NET contact point** (see below). It is recommended that applicants contact the desk officer responsible for the respective country if additional information regarding their application is needed. For technical questions related to the online application procedure, please contact the info desk at INTAS (help@intas.be).

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