



EUROCORES SCHEME

EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) For the EUROCORES theme proposals

What is a EUROCORES theme proposal?

EUROCORES themes are ideas for new EUROCORES Programmes, so a theme proposal is the first step to develop a new EUROCORES Programme. The themes are generated annually through a Call for theme proposals (deadline 1 June) from the European research community and/or national funding or research performing organisations. Through a rigorous peer-review process, a number of the submitted proposals will be selected for further development. Pending the viability of these selected themes in terms of adequate interest and commitment for participation from ESF's Member Organisations, these ideas will be launched into new EUROCORES Programmes.

Who can submit a EUROCORES theme proposal?

Each proposing team should include at least 4 researchers and/or representatives from national funding or research performing organisations from 4 different member countries (the current ESF membership list can be found at www.esf.org/members)

Are there any restrictions on the research fields to which a EUROCORES theme proposal can be submitted?

No, the Call for EUROCORES themes is open to proposals in and across all scientific areas. Topics that can demonstrably benefit from multi-national research collaboration (including inter- and multidisciplinary proposals) are particularly encouraged. Although European collaboration is the main focus of the programme, global collaboration when appropriate or necessary can be envisaged.

How long should the theme proposals be?

The proposals should not have more than 20 pages including appendices.

What is the difference between the ECRP Call and the Call for EUROCORES themes?

The ECRP Call is an open Call within a EUROCORES Programme in the area of Social Sciences only, while the call for theme proposals is a call for new EUROCORES Programme ideas. These ideas, if selected and if adequate support from the Member Organisations are generated will then be turned into new EUROCORES Programmes.

Will there be another Call for EUROCORES theme proposals?

The Call for EUROCORES themes is envisaged to be published annually. The first EUROCORES Call for themes took place in 2005.

Is the resubmission of a proposal, which was not selected last year, possible?

Yes.

Do I need to have an agreement with my national funding agency before I can submit a EUROCORES theme proposal?

No, you are not required to have any agreement with your national funding organisation before submitting a theme proposal. The ESF will distribute the selected theme proposals to all funding organisation such that their level interest and commitment for participation can be acquired. However, ESF strongly recommends you to contact your funding organisation and inform them of your intention to submit a EUROCORES theme proposal, since the launch of a new Programme is dependent on the interest of the Member Organisation in funding the research in the respective Programme.

What does a “well developed theme proposal” really mean?

We are seeking innovative ground-breaking ideas based on sound, realistic and viable scientific principles. A good proposal will also demonstrate effectively why and how the proposed theme will add benefit to the European Research capacity through the envisaged collaborations. Achievable objectives as well as intermediate milestones resulting from the proposed collaborative research should be demonstrated. However, it is reminded that these are the seed ideas for the eventual new programmes and the actual scope of the projects in the programme (if selected) will be as diverse as the scope of the call will define.

Do I also have to think about the actual organisation/management of the running programme?

No, the theme proposal submission and selection are parts of a well established EUROCORES Scheme with existing programme management and organisational structures and guidelines. If your theme proposal is selected to be developed into a EUROCORES Programme, they will be integrated into the existing programme structures. To learn more about the EUROCORES Scheme (including organisation/management) in general, please consult the EUROCORES Glossary on the EUROCORES website at www.esf.org/eurocores or contact the ESF office at eurocores@esf.org.

Can I submit a “big” project proposal?

No, at this stage we are looking for theme proposals (with a relatively wide scope) and not for proposal for a single project (like the European Commission's FP6 “Integrated projects”). Once a theme proposal has been selected and developed into a new EUROCORES Programme, an open Call for project proposals for that EUROCORES Programme will be developed and published in which all scientists from participating countries can compete.

Who will be judging/selecting the proposals?

The selection process has several phases. First, there will be an assessment and ranking done by the appropriate ESF Standing Committees through an assessment form (available on the website www.esf.org/eurocores). This information will then go to the *EUROCORES Committee* (membership information: www.esf.org/eurocores) who will meet in September (with participation of the chairs of the ESF Standing Committees) and who then will recommend around 5 of EUROCORES theme proposals to the ESF office to be developed into new EUROCORES Programmes. For details, please see the Call for EUROCORES themes and the ESF website at www.esf.org/eurocores.

What are the criteria by which my proposal will be judged?

For a list of assessment criteria please see the Call for theme proposals at <http://www.esf.org/medias/EUROCORESthemeCall06version3.pdf>

Can I contact the members of the EUROCORES Committee to “lobby” for my proposal?

The membership of the EUROCORES Committee is available strictly for information only. Under no circumstances should the proposers of a theme try to contact any of the members of the EUROCORES Committee to lobby for a proposal.

Who will finally be funding my research project?

If your proposed theme is selected and once found viable, ESF Member Organisations that are interested in the theme will make their interests known to the ESF. The funding for the actual research projects resulting from the theme thus comes from the national funding or research performing agencies which will be participating in a EUROCORES Programme (e.g. CNRS, DFG, EPSRC). The funding for networking amongst the Collaborative Research Projects within a EUROCORES Programme is currently provided by the ESF through a contract with the European Commission.

How much overhead can I put in the proposal budget?

At the stage of the EUROCORES theme proposal no financial information is needed.

When will there actually be any funding?

The development of a EUROCORES Programme is a timely and complex process because the actual research funding will be provided by the national research funding or performing organisations. For EUROCORES theme proposals submitted by 1 June 2006 and selected to be developed into a EUROCORES programme, and after a selected theme is found viable on the basis of the generated interest and commitment for funding from the Member Organisations, then the Call for outline proposals (projects) should be published in the beginning of March in the subsequent year. The funding of selected projects after a two stage review process should start in March – May of the following year. Summarizing: the development time from the original theme (idea) to the funding of Collaborative Research Projects in the Programme resulting from the theme, is approximately two years.

What is meant by “Requirement of European collaboration”?

European Collaboration is a central and critical feature of the EUROCORES programme. If your research idea (theme) would also be possible to pursue at a national level without any international collaboration, a EUROCORES theme proposal might not be the appropriate instrument for your idea.

What does it mean to “demonstrate synergy” or “integration” among Programme elements?

It is important to note that the EUROCORES themes are not meant to be used as an umbrella for disjointed elements without demonstrated synergy. The programme parts should fit together and benefit from one another in a convincing and “natural” manner.

How is “critical mass of excellent researchers” defined?

From the experience we have in the ESF with EUROCORES Programmes so far, a EUROCORES theme proposal should be attractive to 70 – 200 researchers across Europe. That does not mean that all of these will finally receive funding but only when there is such a scientific base will there be a sufficiently large group of researchers funded after the project selection process (international peer review). In terms science however, the proposal should demonstrate effectively that the synergy among the proposed researchers is essential where the expertise and capabilities are complementary and necessary for achieving the envisaged goals.

How detailed does the overview of related funding initiatives have to be?

An attempt should be made to keep the overview short while providing all the relevant information. This summary is important as it provides an overview of the field and also it underlines the level of understanding and familiarity of the proposers with the latest developments in the field.

How complete does the list of 15 leading groups need to be?

The idea here is to demonstrate awareness of the European dimension of the scientific communities likely to be interested in the Programme and of the leading groups among them. It is important to give the national funding agencies an idea about the likely interest and demands from their communities. The number of “15” groups is to be taken as a guideline not as an absolute number so you could list more (not too many as space is limited) or less and it is up to you whether it includes individuals, groups or labs. .

How different does a proposed programme have to be in comparison to a research programme which is already ongoing?

If the proposed programme is in a similar field but has clear differences, the differences will have to be explained clearly in the proposal. Generally speaking the national funding organisations will not be interested in funding something that they are already funding.

Are “junior scientists” also allowed to submit a proposal?

Generally yes. However, under “qualification of the proposers” you should demonstrate that you have sufficient scientific background to know the latest development of the field. Also you should be able to identify the most appropriate persons to be involved in such a programme at the European level.

What are the roles and responsibilities and privileges of the proposers of a selected EUROCORES theme in the further development of the Programme?

- The theme proposers will be invited to the EUROCORES Programme Preparatory workshop in November/December each year where, in cooperation with representatives from the ESF Member Organisations, the draft call for proposals will be agreed upon.
- Once the call is published, they are allowed to submit outline proposals as any other (groups of) scientists.
- In the assessment of the projects (in the Outline and Full Proposal stage) they will not be treated with any priority or privilege.
- If they decide not to submit a proposal:
 - o They might be asked to serve on the Review Panel for the EUROCORES programme, or
 - o They might be asked to be an independent member in the Scientific Committee of the programme once it is running

Please note that this document will be up-dated regularly. If your question is not answered here, please contact the ESF office at eurocores@esf.org.

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