

Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013)

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This Commission Staff Working Document, together with a Communication from the Commission, constitutes the FP7 Progress Report. While the Communication provides a summary of highlights and challenges, this Commission Staff Working Document presents a detailed assessment of the implementation and the achievements of FP7 so far.

Calls, proposals and grant agreements: the report that there are 3,551 signed grant agreements, or 64.3% of the retained proposals, so far. More than a third of all proposals were submitted under the Specific Programme "Cooperation". 45.3% of all included proposals and more than a third of all retained proposals were concentrated in this programme, leading to 1380 grant agreements so far.

The Specific Programme "People" (Marie Curie Actions) received 23.5% of all applications and constituted the second most sizeable group of included proposals and the most sizeable group of retained proposals (43.0% of the total). 1304 grant agreements have been signed so far under this Specific Programme.

Signed grant agreements involve 21,497 participants with a Community contribution of EUR 6.7 billion, of which the lion's share, namely 73% or EUR 4.8 billion, goes to projects under the Specific Programme "Cooperation".

Participation of New Member States: new Member States participation represents 9.3% of all applicants in retained FP7 proposals and 4.8% (EUR 485.9 million) of total requested EC financial contribution. The success rates are 17.9% for applicants and 13.4% for EC contribution – both considerably lower than the EU27 average (21.8% and 21.5% respectively).

The subscription and performance of the 12 "new" EU Member States ("EU12") vis-à-vis the "older" EU Member States ("EU15") in the "Cooperation" and "Capacities"

Specific Programmes during the first year of FP7 implementation presents a mixed picture. While EU12 participation in terms of numbers of submitted and retained proposals is lower than their share of the EU27 research workforce, the performance is significantly better when one compares their share of GERD to their share of EC contributions. More specifically:

- EU12 researchers represent 14% of the total EU27 population of researchers; the corresponding shares of EU12 applicants during the first years of implementation of the FP7 are now 9.3% in terms of retained proposals;
- the EU12 share of the EU27 2006 GERD is 2.8% while the aggregate requested EC contribution to EU12 applicants in retained proposals is now 4.8%.

These findings should however be put in the context of the current socio-economic conditions in EU27. For example, in 2006 the R&D expenditure per researcher was 4 times that of the corresponding EU12 figure. It was highlighted that EU12 is not a homogeneous group, which is why it may be more pertinent to refer to low- and high-performing Member States in FP7. The reasons for low performance are

manifold and refer to national research landscapes with specific problems, to the lack of a competitive research environment at national level, and to problems encountered by smaller countries that cannot be expected to be competitive in all thematic fields of the FP.

Simplification: the paper discusses steps taken towards simplification, including the introduction of cost reimbursements through flat rates and lump-sums, with actual cost reporting retained where beneficiaries say that this is simpler, and though average personnel costs methodologies.