

# Research RTD, 7th EC Framework Programme 2007-2013: Capacities specific programme for European research and innovation

2005/0188(CNS) - 19/12/2006 - Final act

PURPOSE: to adopt the Specific Programme “**Capacity**” under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Council Decision 2006/0974/EC concerning the Specific Programme “Capacity” implementing the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007 – 2013).

CONTENT: the adoption of the Specific Programme “Capacity” stems from Council Decision 1982/2006 /EC concerning the Seventh Framework Programme (2007-2013). See: [COD/2005/0043](#). The new 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme is centred on four research pillars: Co-operation; Ideas; People; and Capacity.

The purpose of the Capacities Specific Programme is to ensure the optimal use of Europe’s research capabilities. By this it means that the programme will offer a unique role in facilitating and supporting the existing EU’s research infrastructures. A specific programme designed to buttress and strengthen existing – and future – research infrastructures is deemed essential if researchers and European industry alike are able to exploit the EU’s research possibilities. Access to existing infrastructures is considered indispensable for the execution of innovative science and technology projects. The Programme has been awarded a **EUR 4 097 million** budget to help realise these objectives.

More specifically speaking, the Capacities programme will support:

- a) research infrastructures;
- b) research for the benefit of SME’s;
- c) regions of knowledge;
- d) research potential;
- e) science in society;
- f) support for the coherent development of research policies;
- g) activities of international co-operation.

As part of the over-all management of the Capacities programme, the Commission will encourage synergies with other Community policies such as the Structural Funds. In addition it will complement the other “specific programmes” being proposed by the Commission and in particular the Co-operation programme.

By research infrastructure, the Commission is referring to facilities or services that are needed by the research community to conduct research in all scientific and technological fields. Typically, the definition covers: major equipment or sets of instruments used for research purposes. It can also refer to major collections, archives, computing and software applications.

Trans-national access to research infrastructures is given priority. Access may be made available to external users, either in person or by suitable electronic communication and will be implemented through “bottom-up” calls for proposals open to all scientific fields. Other measures will include the deployment of e-Infrastructures based on targeted calls for proposals. The e-Infrastructures will seek to foster high-performance communications and grid empowered infrastructures. There will be an emphasis on supercomputing facilities, data storage and advanced visualisation facilities. In addition to existing structures, the Capacities programme will encourage new research structures through design studies. Concerning the development of new infrastructures the Capacities programme will offer financial help for both preparatory and construction studies.

A further key feature of the Capacities programme is offering streamlined proposals which address the needs and concerns of Europe’s SME’s. By offering SME’s help, the Commission hopes that they will be in a better position to outsource research, increase their research efforts, extend their networks, acquire technological know-how and significantly exploit the results of their own research.

The unexploited possibilities of the EU’s outermost and convergence regions is also given due consideration within the context of the Capacities programme. In order to unleash the EU’s full research potential the programme will create regional “research-driven clusters” made up of regional authorities, universities, research centres, enterprises and related stake-holders. The realisation of such clusters will be done through a more focused use of Structural Funds for R&D investment. In addition “Regions of Knowledge” will be developed with the sole aim of improving the relevance and effectiveness of regional research agendas.

A further chapter proposed under the Capacities programme focuses on the outermost and convergence regions of the EU. Actions under this heading will build on past and existing measures and centre on both the “European Centres of Excellence” and the Marie Curie Host Fellowships for the Transfer of Knowledge.

Under the heading of Science in Society the Commission is seeking to build an effective and democratic European society of knowledge by stimulating a harmonious integration of scientific and technology. It is an attempt to bridge the gap between many who feel alienated from rapid scientific advantages with the scientists themselves.

A final Chapter under the Capacities specific programme deals with activities at an international level. The international co-operation component of this specific programme will have two objectives, namely to support European competitiveness through strategic international partnerships and to address the specific problems faced by third countries on the basis of mutual interest

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