

Working Papers of the Finnish Forest Research Institute 114: 78–80

Possibilities for EU and Nordic research funding

Eeva Karjalainen and Maarit Kytö

Finnish Forest Research Institute, Headquarters, Vantaa Unit, Finland; eeva.karjalainen@metla.fi

EU and Nordic research funding provide only limited possibilities for bottom-up research projects in which the research topics are defined by researcher and which have no limitations for the types of participating organisations or the place of performance. However, there are plenty of funding opportunities for pre-determined research themes, regional development projects, research supporting SMEs, researcher mobility, researcher training and research networking.

Research projects

EU's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) includes ten thematic programmes. Each of the programmes publishes annually calls where the research topics are specified. Especially the programmes "Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Biotechnology" and "Environment" may include topics in the field of vegetative propagation.

(http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/cooperation/home_en.html)

"Ideas" scheme of the EU's FP7 funds pioneering frontier research in any field of science. It provides funding for both starting and advanced top-level researchers. The research topics are defined by the applying researchers themselves (<http://erc.europa.eu/>).

SNS (Nordic Forest Research Co-operation Committee) funds research projects involving at least three Nordic countries. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and north-western Russia may also be included. SNS contribution is limited up to 15000 €/year/participating country.

(www.nordicforestresearch.org)

Development projects

EU's structural funds aim at enhancing economic and social cohesion; at strengthening regional development, competitiveness and employment; and at supporting the integration of border

areas and larger cooperation areas. Projects must include strong development aspect and co-operation between different sectors such as academia, industry, authorities, and municipalities. Many of the programmes cover only a restricted geographical area. The programmes "Baltic Sea" (<http://eu.baltic.net/>), "Northern Periphery" (www.northernperiphery.net/) and "Interreg IVC" (www.interreg4c.net/) provide opportunities for Nordic-Baltic cooperation.

EU's Life+ programme funds best practice, demonstration and innovative projects that contribute to environmental protection or biodiversity issues. Projects can be either national or European. (<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/>)

Research projects involving small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

EU's FP7 has a special programme for research for the benefit of SMEs and SME associations. It aims at strengthening the innovation capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises. At least 3 SMEs from 3 different countries and at least 2 research performers are required. (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/capacities/research-sme_en.html)

In addition, participation of SMEs is an asset in most of the other funding schemes in FP7 and structural funds.

Researcher mobility

Marie Curie Actions (People programme) of the EU's FP7 provides funding for researcher mobility. It grants fellowships for research in another European country or outside Europe. It also funds fellowships for third countries' researchers in Europe. International Staff Exchange Scheme grants financial support for researcher exchange between Europe and third countries. Industry Academia Partnerships and Pathways programme supports researcher mobility between private enterprises and research institutions. (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/home_en.html)

Research infrastructures

EU's FP7 includes Infrastructure programme that funds new and existing infrastructures, such as large scale research installations, collections, special habitats, data-bases etc. (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/capacities/research-infrastructures_en.html)

Research networking

European Science Foundation (www.esf.org) and SNS (Nordic Forest Research Co-operation Committee, www.program.forskningsradet.no/sns) fund workshops, conferences and research networking. In addition, COST (www.cost.esf.org) and NordForsk (www.nordforsk.org) fund research networking. Funding of SNS and NordForsk is restricted to Nordic and Baltic countries and North-Western Russia.

Preparatory projects

SNS (www.program.forskningsradet.no/sns) funds preparatory studies for larger projects and preparation of applications to EU. NordForsk has seed money for supporting excellent research at early stage (www.nordicforestresearch.org).

Researcher training

NordForsk funds research training courses, PhD supervisor courses and Nordic Networks of National Research Schools (www.nordforsk.org). Marie Curie Actions (People programme) of the EU's FP7 provides funding for research training programmes. It includes funding for both young researchers (doctoral students) and for experienced researchers for supervising and training as well as summer schools and workshops (http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/mariecurieactions/itn_en.html).