

Turn your ideas into innovative IST projects! A guide to European funding

Information Society Technologies (IST) are one of the priorities of the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6). Through FP6, the European Commission co-funds innovative research projects with the aim of advancing the European Information Society and thus promoting growth and jobs.

Is your project eligible?

The European Commission focuses its funding on areas bringing significant progress to the European Information Society. It aims to support the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and their applications to boost the competitiveness of the EU economy and for the benefit of citizens in their day-to-day life.

What type of activities can be funded?

The IST priority within FP6 funds five different kinds of projects – known as “instruments”:

- **Research** by means of either **Integrated Projects (IP)** or **Specific Targeted Research Projects (STREP)**. An IP is intended to be broader in scope and ambition than a STREP.
- **Co-ordination** of existing research projects (IST projects and possibly also other projects) to increase their impact. This is done by means of **Coordination Action** contracts. Other work in support of the IST priority can be funded by **Specific Support Action** contracts.
- **Structuring and shaping Europe's research capacity**. This is done through **Networks of Excellence**.

What is a “project consortium”?

EU-funded IST projects should benefit Europe as a whole, not one particular organisation or country. To

receive financial support, they must therefore involve at least three mutually-independent organisations from three different countries. This multinational group of organisations carrying out the project – very often more than the minimum three – is the “project consortium”.

Realising IST funding objectives

In consultation with the Member States, and through workshops, conferences and calls for expressions of interest, an IST priority **Work Programme** is established. The Work Programme outlines the objectives which proposed projects should attain. It is updated on a regular basis to keep up with the fast technological progress in this area.

The Work Programme also contains a roadmap for upcoming calls for research proposals, as well as objectives and timing for the opening and closing of these calls. This is to allow interested researchers a maximum amount of time to put their ideas together and to prepare their proposals.

The EU does not fund good ideas, but good projects. Funding needs to focus on workable projects producing results.

How to apply?

IST Calls for proposals are published in the EU Official Journal and on <http://www.cordis.lu/ist>,

How to succeed?

Your project must consist of a consortium of at least three organisations and be within the scope of the work requested in a call for proposals. Furthermore, the proposal must be submitted by the deadline fixed for the call. If not, it will be automatically rejected.

In the evaluation process your proposal must achieve high scores on a set of six key questions (see overleaf). Explain why your project is relevant to the goals of the IST priority, and how it will impact on the Information Society! Show that it is scientifically and technically excellent and advances the state of the art! Highlight that your consortium comprises high-quality organisations which have the necessary resources available to carry out work within the framework of a well-organised multinational project!



where the IST Work Programme and a **Guide for Proposers** on how to write and submit a proposal can be downloaded.

There is no 'behind the scenes' way of getting funding!

IST Proposals are submitted to the Commission through the Internet. Consortia are given remote web access to their own dedicated space on one of the Commission's computers. So proposals are never "lost in the post", and applicants located in outlying regions of Europe do not have a competitive disadvantage due to their location.

The evaluation process

The Commission asks teams of independent experts, drawn from leading IST-related industrial, research and academic organisations throughout Europe and beyond, to participate in the evaluation process. These experts are asked to evaluate each proposal on a set of six key questions on a scale of 1-5:

- Is the proposed project relevant to the goals included in the call?
- Will the project have a real impact on the research sector and/or the life of the European citizen?
- Is the proposed work scientifically and technically excellent, advancing the state of the art?
- Are the organisations involved of high quality and capable of carrying out this very advanced work?
- Do they have a strong and effective project management plan?
- Do they have the necessary resources to achieve their goals?

An overall score for each proposal is calculated by simple addition of the scores. For each objective in the call, the European Commission then selects for funding the highest-scoring proposals.

Contract negotiations

Commission funding is supplied by means of a contract signed between the consortium and the European Commission. The contract differs according to the type of projects (see above). The contract negotiations cover matters such as incorporation of any improvements suggested by the evaluators into the project plan. The exact financial terms which the Commission will offer are also a subject of the negotiations. In addition, the Commission collects from each consortium

the detailed financial and legal background information about their organisations. This is necessary to justify the commitment of European taxpayers' money to their organisations.

You need help?

- If you are planning a proposal, get in touch with your IST National Contact Point (<http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/ncp.htm>). The National Contact Point is not a Commission official, but a person employed by your government or a national research organisation in your country who is specially trained to help and support IST proposers.
- Should you have specific questions about the application process, contact the IST help desk at ist@cec.eu.int.
- For technical questions about the contents of the objectives of an open call, a list of European Commission contacts is available on a dedicated call Internet webpage on the cordis website (<http://www.cordis/ist>).

The EU can only afford to fund the best projects.

See also:

- Fact sheet 28: IST Research: Building European Leadership for the Knowledge Economy (January 2005)
- Fact sheet 30: European IST Research (2005-2006): Building on Assets, Seizing Opportunities (January 2005)

All fact sheets can be found at :

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/factsheets/index_en.htm

Further Information

- **Cordis IST Website:** <http://www.cordis.lu/ist>
- **Principal Website HomePage**
http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/index_en.htm
- **Europe's Information Society: Thematic Portal**
http://europa.eu.int/information_society/
- **Information Society and Media Directorate-General:**
Av. de Beaulieu 24, 1160 Brussels
info-desk@cec.eu.int