

Announcement

EUROTRANS-BIO to Open a Transnational Call for Proposals in January 2006 : Funding of Industrial Research Projects of Biotechnology SMEs

EUROTRANS-BIO (ETB) is an initiative between public research and development financiers in Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Spain (Basque Country) and the Netherlands, aiming at coordinating national funding programmes for the benefit of SMEs. ETB intends to open three calls for proposals for transnational industrial research projects in the area of biotechnology during the next three years. The first call will open on January 1st, 2006 and is designed for SMEs in Austria, Finland, France, Germany and Spain (Basque Country).

1. TOPIC OF THE FIRST CALL

The strategic objective of the first ETB call for proposals is to foster the competitiveness of Europe's biotechnology industry by supporting the research intensive small and medium sized enterprises and their strategic partnerships. The first ETB call for proposals is a generic call including all fields of biotechnology.

2. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

■ Who can apply ?

Consortia consisting of at least two SMEs (see definition in paragraph 4) from two different participating countries can apply for ETB funding. At least the following countries will participate in the first call : Austria, Finland, France, Germany and Spain (Basque Country). The Netherlands will not participate in the first call. The consortia can involve as many partners as necessary. Large companies, academic research groups and organisations can be a part of the consortia with some restrictions as long as there is an SME in the consortium from the respective country. The coordinator of the consortium has to be an SME.

■ What kind of projects are expected ?

Funding is intended for challenging and innovative industrial research and development and applied research projects. The project duration is not restricted, but approximately 2 year projects are recommended. The overall budget of the call is up to 30 million euros. All EUROTRANS-BIO projects and the consortia should be designed based on the following principles :

- All project partners contribute to, and benefit from, an equitable and balanced co-operation ;
- Adequate protection for intellectual property rights used in and generated during joint research and development are ensured ; and
- Results of collaborative projects are shared through a controlled process that protects and equitably allocates any intellectual property rights created or furnished during co-operation.



■ How to apply ?

The application process is two-phased with the ETB office as the central communication point for all applicants. First a pre-proposal is to be sent to the ETB office. The ETB office will check the compliance with the ETB eligibility criteria which are published in the ETB Call Guidelines. If the pre-proposal passes this first screening, the applicant is then invited to send a project proposal to the ETB office for the detailed ETB evaluation. ETB will provide the pre-proposal form, project proposal form and guidelines for applicants as well as for evaluators. These documents are available on the ETB helpdesk www.eurotransbio.net.

■ When to apply ?

The call will open on January 2, 2006. The deadline for submitting the pre-proposals is February 28, 2006. The results of the pre-proposal phase will be communicated to the applicants within two weeks from arrival to the ETB office, by March 15, 2006 at the latest. For those applicants that pass the pre-proposal phase, the dead-line for full project proposals is April 28, 2006.

■ How to find consortium partners ?

Further information to find consortium partners will be found on the ETB helpdesk www.eurotransbio.net.







■ How will applications be evaluated ?

The pre-proposals will be evaluated by the ETB office, which will conduct a formal eligibility check based on the information in the pre-proposal. The full project proposals will be evaluated by an international evaluation panel, consisting of internationally recognized experts in the field of biotechnology. The evaluation criteria fall into four equally evaluated categories :

- Technological/Scientific Innovation,
- Economic Perspective,
- Consortium and Project Management, and
- Resources.

■ Where to find further information ?

The ETB Call Guidelines including detailed instructions for the application process and other further information can be found at www.eurotransbio.net. For information concerning the national funding decisions and for any other inquiries, you can also contact the following national contact persons :

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3. EUROTRANS-BIO BACKGROUND

■ What is EUROTRANS-BIO ?

EUROTRANS-BIO is a four year project funded by the European Commission ERA-NET scheme. The objective of the ERA-NET scheme is to step up the co-operation and coordination of research activities carried out at national or regional level in the Member States and Associated States through :

- the networking of research activities conducted at national or regional level, and
- the mutual opening of national and regional research programmes.

The scheme will contribute to making a reality of the European Research Area by improving the coherence and coordination across Europe of such research programmes. The scheme will also enable national systems to take on tasks collectively that they would not have been able to tackle independently.

Both networking and mutual opening require a progressive approach. The ERA-NET scheme therefore has a long-term perspective that must also take into consideration the different ways research is organised in different Member States and Associated States.



The EUROTRANS-BIO initiative was born from the will of some European member states and regions to work together in order to support trans-national R&D private/private and private/public co-operations between companies, especially SMEs, and academic labs by coordinating the national or regional public funding programmes.

Thus, the goal of EUROTRANS-BIO is to foster economic and academic biotech players in sharing risks, costs and skills related to innovation in order to develop new products and technologies that could reach the market in the short/medium term more efficiently.

To reach such a goal, the countries/regions involved will launch in the frame of EUROTRANS-BIO common calls for industry-driven trans-national R&D projects. EUROTRANS-BIO is characterized by its ambitious goal to create a completely integrated funding programme within the next 4 years.

Six countries and regions, Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Spain (Basque Country) and the Netherlands, represented by 12 public administrations are at the origin of EUROTRANS-BIO. However, this network will be extended to further European countries and regions during the life of the project.

■ Principles of EUROTRANS-BIO

Within the world-wide competition, European biotech SMEs are facing a challenge to gain critical mass on the market in terms of RTD project portfolio, capitalisation, scientific and managerial excellence. SMEs' participation in transnational R&D projects creates easier access to new technologies and markets, allows sharing the risk and costs and thus improves competitiveness of the European biotech SMEs.

It is an objective of the EUROTRANS-BIO to establish cross-border partnerships between SMEs, improve and accelerate technology transfer, strengthen European efforts to achieve sustainable development, to facilitate an internal market for research and technology and to develop a joint European research policy.

4. DEFINITION OF AN SME

ETB applies the EU definition for SME :

On 6 May 2003 the Commission adopted a new Recommendation 2003/361/EC regarding the SME definition which replaced Recommendation 96/280/EC as from 1 January 2005. (see also http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/sme_definition/index_en.htm).

Enterprise category	Headcount	Turnover (€)	or	Balance sheet total (€)
medium-sized	< 250	= 50 million		= 43 million
small	< 50	= 10 million		= 10 million



EUROTRANS-BIO is a four year ERA-NET project funded by the European Commission (from October 2004 to October 2008).



Ministerie van Economische Zaken

