
GUIDELINES

for Consortia Intending to Submit a Proposal
in the 3rd Joint CORNET Call
for Collective Research Project Proposals

Launch date: February 1, 2007

Pre-Proposal check option offered until April 16, 2007

Closing date: May 31, 2007

Document version: 1.2

Date: January 9, 2007

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Preface

This document describes the rules for submitting proposals for transnational collective research in the framework of the 3rd Joint CORNET Call.

This call is a joint initiative of the following participating organisations (ministries and funding agencies):

- FFG - Austrian Research Promotion Agency, Austria
- AiF - German Federation of Industrial Research Associations, Germany
- RPF - Research Promotion Foundation, Cyprus
- DGTRE – General Directorate for Technologies, Research and Energy of the Ministry of the Walloon Region, Belgium
- IN - Innovation Norway, Norway
- MHEST - Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Slovenia
- CETIM - Technical Centre for Mechanical Industries, France
- IMPIVA - Valencian Institute for the Small and Medium-sized Industry, Valencia, Spain
- AdI - Innovation Agency, Portugal
- MSE – Ministry of Economic Development, Italy
- MSHE, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Poland
- The Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey, Turkey

These organisations (ministries or agencies) will be commonly referred to as “funding agency” or “agency” in this text. More funding agencies might join at a later stage. The most recent information will be available on the CORNET website: www.cornet-era.net. The basic principle in the 3rd joint CORNET Call is that the rules, templates and funding conditions of the involved funding organisations remain applicable.

Some notable national conditions for the 3rd Call are:

- France: focus on the mechanical and machine sector. For other sectors, please contact CETIM to discuss before starting to build a consortium with French participation.
- Italy: Italian applicants must demonstrate that they own a relevant enterprise or establishment in a less-developed area of the country. The major part of project costs must be spent in those areas. Please contact MSE for more details.
- Germany: applicants must be a member of AiF.

As a general rule, the project coordinator and each of the partners should be in contact with their national or regional agency before and during the preparation of project proposals.

The CORNET contact persons in the participating funding organisations can also be found on www.cornet-era.net under tab ‘partners’ or in the Quick Reference Guide which can be downloaded from the website.

1. Introduction

Context of the call

This call is organised by CORNET, which stands for **CO**llective **R**esearch **NET**working. The partners in CORNET are national or regional ministries and funding agencies from various European countries which wish to join forces and work together to broaden the horizon of collective research in Europe.

CORNET is an ERA-NET funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. Like all ERA-NETs, it aims to strengthen the European Research Area by supporting the transnational networking and coordination of national and regional research programmes (see also: www.cordis.lu/coordination/era-net.htm). Its objective is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of collective research policy and practice in Europe.

CORNET is a three-year project which started in March 2005. It networks 23 key players in the field of Collective Research from 17 European countries. For more information on CORNET please visit: www.cornet-era.net.

Basic concepts of the CORNET calls and collaboration between programmes

This 3rd Call for collective research proposals is based on the existing funding programmes for (collective) research in the participating countries. As for the 1st and 2nd CORNET Calls, the added value is that transnational collaboration becomes possible for these national/regional programmes, whereby every project partner will be funded by the funding agency of his own region or country.

This implies that the rules for participation and funding will be basically the same as the ones currently applicable in the various participating countries and regions and that therefore different rules may apply to partners within one project consortium.

The participating agencies will coordinate the evaluation process of project proposals, but the final decision for funding will be in the hands of the respective national and regional agencies according to the existing funding regulations.

The organisation of two previous CORNET joint calls has led to a first level of harmonisation between the involved funding agencies, including agreement on some common CORNET rules for the call and some common evaluation elements.

Please note that the European Commission is not involved in the definition or preparation of the call nor in the evaluation or funding of approved projects.

2. Collective research projects

The main eligibility criterion concerning submitted proposals is that they should address collective research.

The defining characteristic of collective research is that it serves the need of a wide community of companies, mostly SMEs, which is represented by a body such as a federation, a trade association, a sectorial institute, etc., which takes a key role in planning, organising and, generally, paying for the collective research work.

A further defining feature is that knowledge transfer is an integral part of collective research, i.e. ensuring that the results of research are spread throughout the target community of companies, through dissemination, training, etc., and that there is a technical and legal path for technology transfer to all interested SMEs of the concerned sector, without discrimination.

Finally, collective research is generally pre-competitive.

Collective research is distinct from other forms of enterprise R&D, which may generally be classified as:

- “corporate”: R&D performed by a company for its own benefit;
- “collaborative” or “cooperative”: R&D performed by several companies on a shared-cost basis for their own individual benefit;
- “contract”: R&D contracted by one or several companies from one or several third-party research performers, again to the individual benefit of the contracting company or companies.

Such projects are not eligible for funding in the CORNET Call.

A second essential criterion is that it should be demonstrated clearly that there is significant added value to perform the research on a transnational scale, more than just having a larger forum for the dissemination of individual results.

The project should be set up such that the specific competencies of the various countries or regions are combined to build up a level of knowledge and know-how that could not be obtained by one single partner or by a set of individual partners working in parallel.

There is no thematic focus in the 3rd CORNET Call: consortia from all industrial sectors are invited to submit proposals dealing with any technology.

Projects should have a maximum duration of 2 years.

3. Funding

General

The essential feature of the CORNET funding scheme is that funding is allocated according to the rules of the involved national/regional programmes.

Each national CORNET partner agency or funding organisation provides funds to accepted projects. In general, the federation, association or grouping of industrial enterprises will be funded by the corresponding national/regional agency; no money crosses borders.

Amount and terms of funding

Projects are funded by a grant to the project budget.

Most of the participating agencies have no budget restrictions for the 3rd CORNET Call. However, in the case of Italy the maximum eligible amount for the total Italian participation in a single project is 500.000 €.

An important criterion is that the budget is well balanced in all respects. In principle no one partner should have a disproportionately large share, nor should any partner have an insignificant contribution. The size of the target group in each of the participating countries or regions can be taken as a parameter to establish a fair balance, i.e. it makes sense that a country with a large market brings in a proportionally large contribution.

On the other hand, there is no reason to artificially correct an apparent imbalance, e.g. if a specific technical competence is required for the project.

Type of activities that can be funded

The main types of targetted activities are:

- Industrial research and development;
- Applied research and development;

In many countries/regions, the following activities can also be funded:

- Demonstrations;
- Technology / knowledge transfer;
- Dissemination workshops and training.

An overview of the types of activities and their funding in the various countries participating in CORNET is given in the Quick Reference Guide published on the CORNET website: www.cornet-era.net.

Eligible Costs

Also here national/regional rules apply. There are no additional CORNET rules.

Typical costs categories are:

- Personnel costs;
- Special technical equipment required for the project which is not part of the basic equipment of the research performer;
- Overhead costs resulting directly from the project;
- Other costs: patent application costs, purchase of licenses and know-how, materials and other operational costs, third-party consultancy;

In-kind contributions

In-kind contributions, such as use of plant and buildings, tools, materials, testing, consultancy services, researchers or PhD students, etc. are accepted in some countries/regions to a limited extent.

Please check with your agency which costs are eligible, and what the funding rates and conditions are.

Generally not allowed are

- market-related costs;
- costs which are not directly associated with the project;
- costs of the project application;
- eligible costs which cannot be presented in a tracable/auditable form.

Timing of payments

The timing of payments will also be according to national/regional rules and therefore partners will not necessarily receive (pre)payments at the same time.

If some of the partners have approved funding for a period shorter than the full duration of the project (e.g. only 1 year), and conditional funding afterwards, this should be described in the Collaboration Agreement (see section 7).

General remark

Due to the differences between the national/regional funding programmes, there will be (possibly significant) differences in the funding rules and eligible costs for each project partner. It is important that the consortium adopts a clear and open internal communication policy on this, so that partners do not feel disadvantaged during the course of the project. If significant differences exist within the consortium, it is advisable to address this fact in the Collaboration Agreement.

4. Project consortium

Preamble

National/regional rules apply also for the composition of consortia. In addition, some new conditions apply due to the transnational character of the consortia. These additional rules are not in contradiction to the local rules but they might in some cases be more restrictive.

This chapter first describes a number of distinct roles that need to be identified and defined in collective research projects in general. Then the rules for participation in a CORNET project are given for each of these roles.

DEFINITION OF ROLES

1. Associations

For the present purpose of collective research, Associations are defined as organisations that have been set up to represent the interests of SMEs in a particular industrial sector. An essential characteristic of an Association is that it has a well-defined list of members (SMEs) and well-defined membership criteria and rules. Furthermore, the membership of the Association has to include a significant number of SMEs in the related sector.

While the Association may have a wide range of activities, the main tasks concerning research will typically include:

- Identifying the research needs of the members;
- Organising collective research based on the identified needs of the members and carried out by a research performer;
- Facilitating technology transfer of the research results to the members.

Examples of Associations according to these terms are professional federations and trade associations.

In some countries, an ad-hoc grouping of SMEs is considered an Association as long as they have a clear membership, are open to other SMEs in the sector to join the group, and strive to represent a significant part of the SME community in their sector.

In some countries, organisations have been set up to focus mainly or solely on the research needs of SMEs in a particular sector, and also to perform the research in-house. Such organisations have a well-defined and representative membership of SMEs in the concerned sector, and therefore they comply with the definition of Association. They play a double role, as Association and Research Performer (see below). Examples are the Centres Techniques in France, the Centros Technologicas in Spain, and the Collective Centres in Belgium.

2. Research Performer

The Research Performer is the organisation that carries out the research defined and requested by the Association, in general based on a quotation which the Research Performer submits to the Association. Research Performers usually are university laboratories or other publicly funded and/or private research institutes.

As mentioned above, some collective research centres combine this role with the role of Association.

3. SME User Committee

An SME User Committee (SME UC) is a small group of companies that have a particular interest in the R&D results of the project and which commit themselves to be available (e.g. twice a year) to participate in SME UC meetings organised by the project coordinator for the purpose of monitoring project progress.

It is the role of the SME UC to advise the project consortium on the relevance of the R&D results and to give direction on how to proceed. Whenever it is planned to test R&D results in a real environment, the involved SMEs should be members of the SME UC. The SME UC is set up at the beginning of the project and supervises/advises it until the end.

RULES FOR CORNET PROJECT CONSORTIA

1. Eligible partners

Only Associations, as defined above, are eligible partners for CORNET projects, referred to as 'partner' in the remainder of this document.

2. CORNET Project Consortium

- A minimum of 3 eligible partners (i.e. Associations) are required, from 3 different countries/regions that have a funding agency participating in CORNET. A Consortium with two partners from two different regions in the same country, plus one partner from a second country, is eligible if the two regions have each their own agency participating in CORNET.
- In the exceptional case that for a specific topic sufficient critical mass can be demonstrated with eligible partners from only 2 CORNET countries, such proposals will be considered as well. This will only be the case when the selected topic is only relevant for a limited number of countries/regions and when the two partners of the consortium represent the main players in the field.
- The consortium has to be well-balanced – see also Section 3 Funding. This will be an important evaluation criterion.

3. Project Coordinator

Each consortium nominates one partner (i.e. Association) as project coordinator. One of the responsibilities of the project coordinator during the proposal preparation phase is to ensure that every involved partner is in contact with its national/regional funding agency in order to ensure compliance with national/regional rules.

The funding agency of the project coordinator will provide specific support to comply with the CORNET rules.

Any Association as defined in this section can take the role of project coordinator **EXCEPT** for the mentioned ad-hoc grouping of enterprises, since it is expected that such an organisation will not be sufficiently established to take that responsibility.

4. Research Performers

Research Performers execute the research work as subcontractors to the Associations. They are not formally partners of the Consortium. In case of acceptance of the project, they are required to sign the Collaboration Agreement (see Section 7), since they are the main producers of IP and potential performers of dissemination activities. These two issues, IP and dissemination, form the main part of the Collaboration Agreement.

If needed, other (commercial) contributors can be included as minor subcontractors to one of the partners. In some countries/regions limitations apply for the funding of subcontractors and often quotations have to be requested from more than one potential subcontractor. It is advisable to check funding conditions with the concerned agencies whenever subcontractor work is required.

5. SME User Committee

An SME User Committee (SME UC) is mandatory for CORNET projects, even if the national/regional rules do not prescribe this. Each participating country or region must have at least 5 SMEs in the SME UC.

Members of the SME UC are not partners of the project, and they are not required to sign the Collaboration Agreement.

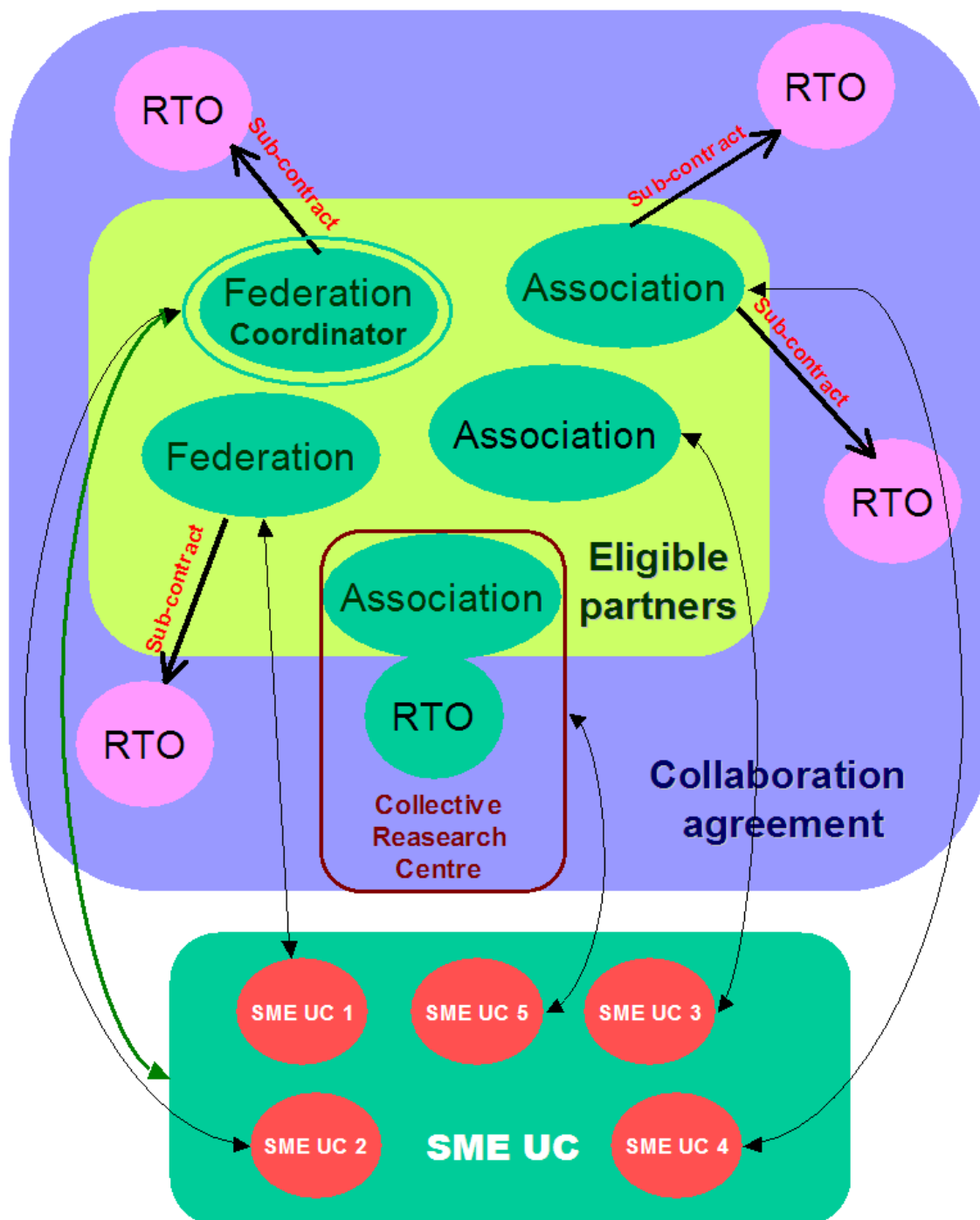
Consortia will be required to organise regular SME UC meetings, to take minutes of the meetings, to take the advice on board, and to show at subsequent SME UC meetings how the feedback was integrated in the project plan.

In case national/regional rules exist for (the equivalent of) SME UCs, these rules also need to be respected by the concerned partner(s). In general, travel costs of SMEs in the SME UCs are not funded.

The Consortia are free to decide how the SME UC meetings will be organised (either one transnational meeting for all involved or a series of national/regional meetings) provided that a significant number of SME UC members are regularly involved.

Letters of Intent to join the SME Users Committee, signed by a legal representative of the corresponding SME, must be provided with the proposal. The presence of a representative and motivated SME UC will be an important eligibility criterion for CORNET projects.

The figure below presents the construction of a CORNET project and the involved actors.



5. Application process

Timing

Although in many countries/regions projects can be submitted continuously, CORNET collective research projects will be submitted according to a deadline.

The deadline for the 3rd Joint CORNET Call is May 31, 2007, 12 noon.

After that date no additional input to the proposal is possible.

Advice & Assistance

It is highly recommended to discuss the proposal concept, innovation potential, target group, project construction, financial planning, etc. with an advisor from your funding agency before detailed preparation of the proposal, and to interact further during development of the consortium and writing of the proposal.

Pre-Proposal check

Agencies participating in the 3rd CORNET Call offer to give advice to consortia based on an advanced draft of the project proposal.

For this advice to be relevant, it is necessary that the pre-proposal document contains:

- a complete description of the project consortium with the competences of each partner;
- an accurate description of the objectives of the project, clearly indicating the state-of-the-art and how the project intends to achieve progress beyond the state-of-the-art;
- a preliminary work plan;
- the financial structure;
- the dissemination plan;
- the exploitation perspectives.

Pre-proposals will be submitted by the project coordinator to his agency. Other partners are free to submit the proposal to their own agency. This is recommended in particular if they wish to check specific national/regional eligibility criteria. A pre-proposal template will be available on the CORNET website (www.cornet-era.net) at the launch date of the call.

Deadline for submission of pre-proposals is April 16, 2007.

Feedback will be provided to the consortia in a written form or in a face-to-face meeting before April 30, 2007 so that the consortia will have a further month to integrate the feedback.

Submission of full proposal

The project has to be submitted by the Project Coordinator to his national/regional agency, which thereby - by definition - becomes the Assigned Agency for the project. The CORNET contact person of the Assigned Agency should be mentioned in the cover letter: see www.cornet-era.net under tab 'partners'.

The signatures of the legal representatives of all partners, as well as those from the SME Users Committee members, have to be included.

The coordinator is requested to provide an electronic version of the project proposal, which includes a scanned copy of all signed documents, in pdf format. This pdf file will be used as the only master copy for the evaluation of the proposal. The Assigned Agency will distribute it electronically to other involved agencies and experts.

At the same time, the coordinator will submit a paper version to his agency, including the original signed documents. The postmark or acknowledgement of receipt (in case of personal delivery) will count as proof of the timely submission of the proposal.

In parallel, all partners will send an application form to their own national/regional agency, using the local template, referring to the CORNET project proposal. The same deadline applies for the national/regional submission: May 31, 2007. A list of the national/regional agencies where these forms are to be submitted can be found on www.cornet-era.net.

If, for convenience of an agency, the CORNET proposal is attached to the local proposal, it is important to know that this attachment will not be used in the CORNET evaluation process: only the master copy submitted by the coordinator will be used.

Additional information that may be required by the national/regional agencies but that is not relevant for other agencies or external experts can be mentioned in the local project proposal.

Please note that in many countries/regions it is not allowed to send the national/regional proposal submission form by e-mail. However, the CORNET (pre-)proposal submission form is not bound by these regulations and can be sent by e-mail.

Language

The CORNET application form should be entirely in English, including any annexes, partner descriptions and SME UC Letters of Intent.

The national/regional application form will generally be in the national language, unless agreed otherwise with the concerned agency.

Proposal template

A proposal template will be available on the CORNET website, www.cornet-era.net, at the launch date of the call.

In addition to the innovation purpose and the technical project description, the proposal should explicitly address all of the eligibility criteria mentioned in these Guidelines and convincingly explain how they are fulfilled. Also a complete and detailed financial plan must be given.

6. Evaluation and Selection Process

The assigned agency will send the pdf copy of the CORNET application received from the Project Coordinator to all involved agencies. This version of the proposal is the only official version for the evaluation process. This proposal has to contain all relevant information; subsequent addenda will not be taken into account in the evaluation process.

Evaluation criteria

The evaluation of the projects will be done with respect to 4 groups of indicators with corresponding sub-indicators, as listed below.

Indicators **I** and **II** refer to the managerial and economic aspects of the project (assessment of the financial and organisational capabilities of the applicant and his/her ability to implement the project results and transfer results to the SME community).

Indicators **III** and **IV** refer to the technical assessment of the project, its suitability in the context of the CORNET programme and the availability of the required technical expertise from the research performers.

It is important to stress that R&D excellence is only a part of the value of a collective research project. The potential market impact of the project for the sector, and the dissemination and technology transfer strategy to translate the R&D results into market applications, as well as the capability of the consortium to implement this, are also very decisive factors.

I. Aptitude of the Applicant

- 1.1 Financial commitment of stakeholders
- 1.2 Managerial capability of the consortium leader
- 1.3 Ability to disseminate project results

II. Capability of the consortium to implement R&D results

- 2.1. Added value to the enterprises (members of the associations)
- 2.2 Economic effects of the project (job creation etc.)
- 2.3 (Sustainable) cooperation of the associations

III. Potential Impact and Quality of the Consortium

- 3.1. Main focus on SMEs (for instance, degree of SME representation by associations)
- 3.2. Dissemination strategy
- 3.3. Expertise of the research performer
- 3.4. Adequacy of project resources in relation to the work plan

IV. Technical/Scientific Assessment

- 4.1. Innovation
- 4.2. Risk, scientific excellence
- 4.3. Expertise of the project partners, state-of-the-art competence
- 4.4. Quality of the approach, methodology and work plan

Evaluation process

All involved agencies have agreed on a common CORNET coordinated evaluation process, which is interlaced with their own decision process.

Step 1: Eligibility

In-house experts of the assigned agency check the compliance of the applications with the eligibility criteria (collective character of the project, composition of the consortium, eligibility of costs, etc.).

Step 2: External evaluation

The evaluation is based on the assessment of external experts. They are experienced, technology-oriented experts within the relevant fields, from industry or academia. The confidentiality of the experts is ensured. External experts will be recruited only in Europe, and they will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement/non-disclosure agreement. By the nature of collective research and the European scope of CORNET, it is not expected that the selection of external experts should give rise to conflicts of interest. However, if concerns exist, please inform your agency. The names of the experts will be known to the involved agencies, but they will not be disclosed to the project consortia.

The expert team consists of 3 members from different countries to be appointed from the expert pool created by CORNET and the involved agencies. Experts are independent and have no working relation with any of the consortium partners. By preference, experts from countries not involved in the project proposal will be chosen.

Step 3: CORNET recommendation

Based on the feedback from the external experts, representatives from the involved agencies will jointly formulate a funding recommendation. Alternatively, they may request additional information from the project consortium before coming to a funding recommendation.

Step 4: National/regional evaluation

Every involved agency will process the national/regional part of the proposals, in general following their standard procedures, and decide whether or not to fund their national/regional partner(s) in the project proposal.

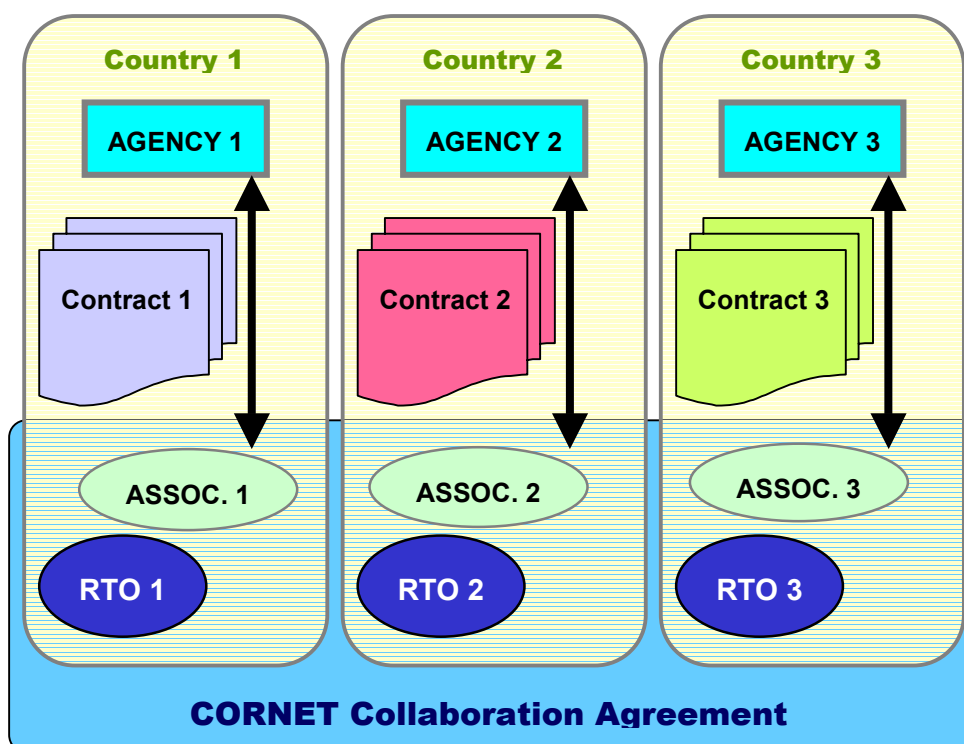
Timing of the submission and evaluation process

- Pre-proposal submission:	April 16, 2007
- Proposal submission:	May 31, 2007
- Final funding decisions:	November, 2007
- Start of first projects:	December, 2007

7. Contract Agreements

Project contracts (one contract per involved agency)

Each partner will sign a contract with his funding agency, in line with the usual (collective) research arrangements. The contractual conditions may differ from one partner to another in line with the different national/regional rules. These contracts are outside the scope of the CORNET collaboration.



Collaboration agreement including IPR and dissemination arrangements

In addition to the national/regional contract, a Collaboration Agreement (CA) will be required between all partners in the project. The agencies will not be signatories to this contract; however they will receive a copy of it. In case the national/regional rules already require a partnership contract to be signed between the Association and the RTO and other partners, then the Collaboration Agreement will generally replace that partnership contract. Consortia are advised to check this specifically with the involved agencies during the preparation of the proposal.

As a general rule, the Collaboration Agreement should only deal with issues that may arise due to the transnational character of the CORNET collaboration. It should not repeat terms that are already addressed in the contracts with the national/regional agencies.

The Collaboration Agreement does not need to be presented at the time of proposal but the application should show that there is agreement on the main issues.

The following points should be addressed in the Collaboration Agreement:

- General information
 - Title of the project; reference to the project proposal text;
 - Purpose of the Collaboration Agreement;
 - Identification of each party to the agreement;
 - Definitions of terms used in the agreement.
- The internal organisation and management of the consortium
 - Role, responsibilities and authority of the coordinator;
 - Management committees: establishment, composition, procedures, role;
 - SME Users Committee: role, transnational coordination, meetings, documentation of feedback, process to ensure impact on project direction;
 - Provisions for dealing with non-performing partners.
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) / Ownership of knowledge
 - Confidentiality arrangement between the partners, if necessary;
 - Agreement on the allocation and the terms of exercising the ownership of the knowledge developed in the project; agreement on patent application process and cost sharing, e.g. knowledge arising from work carried out under the project shall be the joint property of the enterprise grouping(s);
 - Identification of relevant patents, know-how, and information at the start of the project, if necessary;
 - Agreement on the use of pre-existing know-how during and, if applicable, after the project.
- Dissemination
 - In most cases there is a dissemination obligation formulated in the contracts with the national/regional agencies. Any additional dissemination commitments on transnational level should be addressed in the CA.
- Setting out a plan for the 'use' of knowledge
 - Exercise of joint ownership;
 - Terms to use results and IPR in a detailed and verifiable manner, who will exploit what, when and how and any potential access rights which may be necessary;
 - Additional or more favourable access rights, including access rights to third parties (other federations, associations) and requirements applicable to access rights. Such requirements should cover the whole of Europe; not only the countries or regions directly involved in the project or other CORNET partners. However, access conditions can vary according to category.
- Legal provisions
 - Duration of the agreement;
 - Process for amendment / revision of the agreement;
 - Applicable law and the settlement of disputes.

Note: the technical content of the project as well as the financial arrangements do not need to be addressed in the Collaboration Agreement since they are dealt with in the contracts with the national/regional agencies.

8. Project Monitoring

General

Apart from the internal project monitoring by the project coordinator, there are two levels where project monitoring will take place: the national/regional level, according to the existing rules of the concerned funding programme, and the transnational CORNET level. The national/regional monitoring procedures remain in place; they are indeed the main instruments for technical and financial reporting.

Project coordinators will be requested to inform the assigned agencies about upcoming Steering Committee meetings, Consortium meetings and SME UC meetings, and to allow a representative from the assigned agency to participate in the meetings as an observer.

CORNET monitoring

Reporting at CORNET level will focus on the transnational character of the collaboration, with minimal additional effort for the consortia.

Monitoring will be organised as a yearly monitoring meeting where the project coordinators (or representatives from the consortium) will present the overall progress to the involved agencies. This meeting will be organised by CORNET on a date to be agreed with the project coordinators.

The presentation should cover:

- Summary of technical progress;
- A brief comparison between real deliverables and milestones in relation to the original project plan;
- A list of SME UC meetings that have taken place, a summary of the feedback collected at these meetings, and a plan to integrate the feedback into the project;
- An overview of all dissemination activities, and comparison with original planning;
- An update of the exploitation perspectives, including more concrete plans for transfer to specific SMEs;
- Collaboration problems or issues encountered during the execution of the project;
- General lessons learnt and advice for improvement of future CORNET calls.

The project coordinator (or the representative) needs to organise the recording of detailed minutes during their part of the meeting and these minutes, together with the minutes of SME UC meetings, will be sent to all involved agencies as a yearly report, within 4 weeks after the meeting. No other intermediate reporting will be required at CORNET level. At the end of the project, a short project summary (max. 2 pages) needs to be provided by the project coordinator.

Note: the feedback from the SME UC meeting(s) is an essential part of the yearly reporting, and it is imperative that these meetings are organised regularly, including one shortly before the yearly presentation in all concerned countries or as one transnational SME UC meeting, depending on what option the Consortium has chosen.

9. Dissemination

General

Collective research projects under the CORNET initiative should pay special attention to wide dissemination of the technical and scientific knowledge created, and to the sharing of the experience acquired in transferring that knowledge to industry, in particular to SMEs.

Dissemination means the publication through different media of project results, such as scientific results, blueprints, technical specifications and designs, standards, procedures, and any other relevant documentation generated during the project. Dissemination activities pursue a detailed plan that describes what to disseminate, when to disseminate it, and to whom the results have to be disseminated.

While exploitation conditions may vary according to various categories of target groups (e.g. the project consortium, the CORNET members, the user group, other EU-based organizations), it is important that dissemination of information on the results should be as open and broad as possible, without differentiating according to categories.

The level of detail disseminated must be in line with the IPR rules set forth in the Collaboration Agreement but enough detail must be provided for any SME to be able to make a well-balanced investment decision, or, in case of standards, to appreciate whether or not it is applicable to its own activities.

It is advisable that partners cross-check with each other, and mutually approve, the contents of the information prior to any dissemination activity.

Dissemination targets

Main targets for the dissemination activities will be:

- all interested enterprises – especially SMEs – of the relevant industrial branches;
- the scientific community in the relevant area;
- other public and private organizations (e.g. standardization bodies, large companies, innovation agencies, technology transfer offices, innovation relay centres, business innovation centres, banks, venture capital firms, national/regional government bodies).

Dissemination activities

The dissemination of the project results can be by different means, for instance:

- a website from which it will be possible for the wider community to access documents and other materials, as well as to contact project partners;
- publication of periodic project newsletters;
- publication of project results on journals and reviews both of a scientific and of a wide diffusion nature;
- workshops and seminars targeted at enterprises represented by the Industrial Association/Grouping involved in the project, to the organizations participating in the Users Committee, and to any other interested participants;
- presentation of project results at conferences;

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- realization of test-bed sites and/or simulation sites, where, by means of physical and/or virtual prototypes, the potential users can assess the new technology;
 - training activities regarding scientific and technical project results as well as on managerial aspects related to the implementation of the technology, aimed at technical and managerial staff from SMEs and Industrial Association/Groupings. Realization of a “training package” for remote learning;
 - realization and publication of feasibility analyses for the exploitation of project results, e.g. market analysis, technology auditing, building of value, cost and investment models for the developed technology/solution, economic, social and environmental impact analysis, etc.;
 - realization and diffusion of catalogues of “potential technology solutions”;
 - publication of advertisements, banners, etc. on specific reviews and/or web sites, announcing dissemination activities and the way to access the information;
- Partners should check with their agencies which of these activities are eligible for funding.

Dissemination rules

All the dissemination activities and their contents should be communicated to the other consortium partners so that they can join the initiative - or object to the activity.

Announcement of dissemination activities, as well as any other relevant information, should be available in English in addition to the native language of the project partners.

Project partners are requested to perform a significant number of the above mentioned dissemination activities before the end of the project.

All the dissemination activities must be communicated in advance to the Assigned Agency in order to have the possibility to announce them through the CORNET media.

All the dissemination material must give explicit mention of the CORNET initiative (in addition to reference to the national funding).

The two-page summary report at the end of the project should also be made available for wide dissemination (including publication on the CORNET website).

Description in the project proposal

The project proposal must explicitly describe the dissemination *strategy* and define the dissemination *plan* in terms of:

- **Subjects:** estimation of kind and amount of knowledge to be transferred (technical subjects, managerial aspects, etc.);
- **Target groups:** list of types of SMEs (industry, size, location, etc.) which may use the results (hierarchy of dissemination targets);
- **Activities:** forecast of the envisaged dissemination activities to be performed;
- **Process model:** description of the dissemination process (i.e. resources, teachers, publishers, activity chain, etc.)
- **Schedule:** detailed planning of the dissemination activities;
- **Costs:** estimation of the relative weight of the dissemination activities in total project cost, how many SMEs and how many staff will be directly involved.

10. Overview

Main conditions and eligibility criteria

- Collective research project – see Section 2;
- Minimum 3 partners from 3 countries or regions - see Section 4;
- Eligible partners are associations as defined in Section 4, research performers participate as subcontractor ;
- Demonstrate good balance of the consortium, and added value of the transnational dimension;
- Maximum project duration is two years;
- SME User Committee is obligatory, 5 SMEs per country/region, signed letters of intent of the SMEs must be provided with the proposal - see Section 4;
- Collaboration agreement is obligatory - see Section 7;
- A yearly transnational monitoring meeting needs to be scheduled (and budgetted for) – see Section 8;
- At the end of the project, a two-page summary needs to be provided;
- Dissemination activities should be European in scope. This includes information on dissemination activities in English – see Section 9;
- Partners are strongly recommended to consult with their national/regional agency during the preparation of the proposal.

Practical arrangements

- Consortia have the possibility to take advantage of a Pre-Proposal check until April 16, 2007.
- The project coordinator submits a paper copy and pdf file of the CORNET proposal to his national/regional agency by May 31, 2007 (noon) - see Section 5.
- All partners submit a national/regional application form to their respective agencies by May 31, 2007 (noon), i.e. all partners from the same country/region jointly submit one proposal to their national/regional agency - see Section 5.
- Timetable for decisions: see Section 6.

Information and templates available on the CORNET website (www.cornet-era.net)

- General information about CORNET;
- General information about collective research programmes of the involved agencies in the Quick Reference Guide;
- Overview of all participating ministries and funding agencies in the 3rd CORNET Call;
- Contact persons within each of the national/regional agencies who are available for advice and support during the preparation of the project proposal for the 3rd CORNET Call. These contact persons should also be notified when the proposal is delivered to the national/regional agency through the usual channel;
- This Guidelines document;
- Template for the project proposal;
- Guideline for the Collaboration Agreement;
- A list and brief summaries of all projects that are in preparation, so that others can join.