

# Structuring Plant Genomics Research in Europe

## PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT of the 1<sup>st</sup> ERA-PG CALL

The ERA-NET Plant Genomics (ERA-PG) will issue its first Transnational Call for Proposals for Collaborative Research Projects on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. The Call Notice will be published at [www.erapg.org](http://www.erapg.org) and respective sources of information. The purpose of this pre-announcement is to enable interested parties to build their consortia and start preparing their proposals. The call for pre-proposals will close on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2006, 12.00 CET.

### 1. Background

ERA-PG is a network of funding organisation from European countries and Israel. The coordination of the network is supported by the European Commission under the ERA-NET scheme of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme to strengthen the European Research Area.

ERA-PG was established in January 2004 by twelve funding organisations. It has the ambition to further structure and integrate national plant genomics programmes in order to reduce fragmentation of research efforts and realise scientific excellence through real transnational collaboration, integration and synergy. In 2005 five more funding organisations joined ERA-PG. The network is coordinated by NGI/NWO, The Netherlands.

There is no central EU funding support for collaborations between national genomics programmes and the ERA-PG network aims to establish a transnational funding programme in plant genomics, transcending national boundaries.

List of network members, with the organisations that will contribute financially to the 1<sup>st</sup> ERA-PG call in bold.

Austria (AT):	Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK)
<b>Belgium (BE):</b>	<b>Ministry of Flanders, Science and Innovation Division</b>
<b>Denmark (DK):</b>	<b>Danish Research Council for Production and Technology Sciences</b>
<b>Finland (FI):</b>	<b>Academy of Finland (AKA)</b>
<b>France (FR):</b>	<b>National Research Agency (ANR)</b>
<b>Germany (DE):</b>	<b>Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)</b>
<b>Germany (DE):</b>	<b>German Research Foundation (DFG)</b>
Israel (IL):	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MOARD)
<b>Italy (IT):</b>	<b>Ministry of University Education and Research (MIUR)</b>
<b>The Netherlands (NL):</b>	<b>Netherlands Genomics Initiative (NGI/NWO)</b>
<b>Norway (NO):</b>	<b>Research Council of Norway (RCN)</b>
Portugal (PT):	Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT)
<b>Spain (ES):</b>	<b>Ministry of Education and Science (MEC)</b>
Sweden (SE):	Swedish Research Council (VR)
Sweden (SE):	Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (FORMAS)
Switzerland (CH):	Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF)
<b>United Kingdom (UK):</b>	<b>Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)</b>

## 2. Purpose of the call

The objective of this call is to stimulate true collaboration between research teams of different countries in order to achieve the highest quality projects, to increase synergies between national programmes and to strengthen European competitiveness in plant genomics research. The call is subdivided in two sub calls (A and B).

## 3. Research themes

### 3.1 Research Themes for Sub Call A

The research themes have been identified in consultation with the plant genomics community in Europe. The themes are broad and inclusive and address common issues:

- Genomic approaches to adaptation and acclimation to abiotic and biotic stresses.
- Yield stability and intrinsic genetic potential of plants including study of natural variation and its utility in breeding programmes.
- Development of crop and forage plants for low input systems including protein crops and crops for animal feed.
- Quality traits for food and feed including traits associated with food storage and processability. Specialised uses of crops.
- Genomic research into the development of high value crops, and also non-food uses for crops; trees for fuel and fibre production, and other sources of fuel, fibre and biodegradable packaging materials. Novel uses for plants will also include bioproduction of therapeutics and nutraceuticals.
- Joint development of genomic tools (technologies and resources), where this addresses and supports the overall objectives of ERA-PG.
- Other topics that contribute to the development of the European Research Area in plant genomics.

Applications for technology development should be clearly described in the context of biological questions addressing the scientific content of the call. There should be demonstrable evidence of collaborative use and dissemination of such resources and technologies.

### 3.2 Research Themes for Sub Call B

The research themes have been defined in the consultation between the countries of the *Trilateral Initiative* (Cordoba meeting) and address application oriented research in following themes:

- Improved quality in food and feed.
- Sustainable agriculture with improved productivity and yield stability under low input production systems and under biotic and abiotic stress.
- Plants for innovative uses such as energy crops or plants as factories.
- Plants to improve and stabilize our environments.

*Notice for both Sub Call A and B: scientific approaches should be genomic and/or post-genomic in nature. Applications will not be considered where they primarily address the elucidation of function of single genes. A combination of various genomics and quantitative genetics tools should be employed. Plants under investigation can be reference/model plants as well as crops (including trees and forage plants).*

## 4. Call structure

Within the abovementioned themes Collaborative Research Projects should be established *bottom up* by consortia of excellent partners, demonstrating evidence of *added value* as exclusively enabled by the international collaboration. In other words, projects will deliver results over and above the impact of non-collaborative projects funded by individual countries.

Funding will be available from national funding organisations only for those participants of the respective residence country. Projects can be funded for a maximum of three years. In exceptional cases four years, but subject to national regulations.

Both sub calls are open to research groups from all countries under the consortium eligibility criteria of the sub calls. In addition to the general Call Notice, applicants shall refer to the terms and conditions of their responsible funding agencies. For this purpose each funding agency will attach a National Annex to the general ERA-PG Call Notice.

Sub Call A (academic) Call for publicly funded research in plant genomics	Sub Call B (public-private) Trilateral partnership and beyond; the future for European public/private partnerships in plant genomics <sup>1</sup>
<b>Addressing:</b> consortia of <i>universities and public research institutions</i> , involved in basic research in one of the themes mentioned under 3.1	<b>Addressing:</b> <i>public-private partnerships</i> , involved in application-oriented research in one of the themes mentioned under 3.2
<b>Financed by:</b> BE, DE(DFG), DK, FI, IT, NL, NO and UK	<b>Financed by:</b> DE (BMBF) <sup>2,3</sup> , ES <sup>2</sup> and FR <sup>2,4</sup> , and other partners (e.g. UK) as described below.
<b>Open for:</b> Research groups of the funding countries, subject to eligibility criteria as stated in the respective National Annexes. The sub-call is also open for additional partners from other countries - bringing their own funds and demonstrating true added value to the partnership.	<b>Open for:</b> Research groups of the <i>Trilateral Initiative</i> (DE(BMBF), ES and FR). The sub-call is also open for additional partners from other countries, preferably ERA-PG countries – bringing their own funds and demonstrating true added value to the partnership.
<b>Consortium:</b> A consortium should minimally include three public partners from three financially contributing ERA-PG countries. Projects may be supported by companies, but companies may not receive public funds.	<b>Consortium:</b> Public/private consortia need a minimum of one private partner of the <i>Trilateral Initiative</i> , although the participation of two or more private partners from different countries of the <i>Trilateral Initiative</i> will be favoured. In addition, at least two public partners from two countries of the <i>Trilateral Initiative</i> need to participate in such a consortium. A minor proportion of consortia without direct industrial/private participation might be eligible for funding if at least three academic partners from all three countries of the <i>Trilateral Initiative</i> participate. Such collaborations need to demonstrate that they pursue truly application-oriented objectives. Regarding the evaluation it will be positively rated if consortia without direct industrial/private participation can adequately show substantial/relevant external industrial/private support.
<b>Funding modalities:</b> According to national terms.	<b>Funding modalities:</b> According to national terms.

<sup>1</sup> Sub Call B is based on the positive experiences of the partners of the *Trilateral Initiative*, France, Germany, and Spain. It intends to continue and extend their cooperation calling for application-oriented research projects, within the framework of public/private partnerships.

<sup>2</sup> The funds provided by the DE (BMBF), ES (MEC) and FR (ANR) are exclusively devoted to Sub Call B.

<sup>3</sup> The participation of the BMBF in this 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Proposals of ERA-PG is subject to approval by the newly elected federal government - in terms of time schedule and content - as well as provision of pre-assigned funds by the parliament.

<sup>4</sup> The participation of the ANR in this 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Proposals of ERA-PG is subject to the availability of the respective financial resources

## 5. Application and evaluation

There will be a two-stage application procedure (pre-proposals and full proposals) and accordingly a two-stage review procedure.

Pre-proposals (in the first stage) and full proposals (in the second stage) should be submitted electronically to the central ERA-PG Call Secretariat. Application forms will be available at [www.erapg.org](http://www.erapg.org).

The applications will be reviewed by a Programme Board composed of scientific experts from each of the contributing ERA-PG countries. After evaluation of the pre-proposals, selected applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be peer reviewed by a minimum of two external reviewers before further consideration and ranking by the Programme Board.

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Novel, innovative research within the scope of the call (Sub Call A or B).
- Scientific merit and feasibility of the project.
- Transnational added value and complementarities of expertise.
- Scientific track record of applicants.
- Evidence of true cooperation within the collaboration.
- Economic, societal and environmental relevance.
- Adequateness of used resources and financial requirement.

The final funding decisions rest with the corresponding national authorities.

Application Guidelines will be published on [www.erapg.org](http://www.erapg.org) with the Call Notice on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2006. Applicants are advised to contact their National Call Coordinator before starting to prepare proposals for application.

The content of the call described in this pre-announcement may be subject to changes and is not legally binding to the funding agencies.

## 6. Time schedule (as planned)

Call announcement:	1 February 2006
Due-date pre-proposals:	16 March 2006, 12.00 CET
Selection of pre-proposals:	28 April 2006
Due-date full proposals:	29 June 2006, 12.00 CET
Selection of full proposals:	14 October 2006
National funding decisions:	Begin 2007 at latest
Start of selected projects:	December 2006 – March 2007

## 7. List of Contact Persons

### ERA-PG Call Secretariat

Mr. Paul Beckers  
Netherlands Genomics Initiative  
P.O. Box 93035  
2509 AA The Hague  
+31 (0) 70 3440 850  
Email: [beckers@genomics.nl](mailto:beckers@genomics.nl)

### National Call Coordinators

#### Belgium

Dr. Monika Sormann  
Ministry of Flanders, Science and Innovation Division  
Boudewijnlaan 30  
1000 Brussels  
Tel: +32 2 553 58 64  
E-mail: [monika.sorrman@wim.vlaanderen.be](mailto:monika.sorrman@wim.vlaanderen.be)

#### Denmark

Mrs. Jette Nielsen  
Danish Research Agency (DRA)  
Artillerivej 88  
2300 Copenhagen  
Tel: +45 35 44 62 00  
E-mail: [jen@forsk.dk](mailto:jen@forsk.dk)

#### Finland

Dr. Reetta Kettunen  
Programme Manager  
ESGEMO coordination office  
Dept. Applied Biology  
PO Box 27  
FI-00014 University of Helsinki  
Tel: +358 (0)9 191 59666  
E-mail: [reetta.kettunen@helsinki.fi](mailto:reetta.kettunen@helsinki.fi)

Dr. Sirpa Huuskonen  
Science Adviser  
Suomen Akatemia (AKA)  
PO Box 99  
(Vilhonvuorenkatu 6)  
FI-00501 Helsinki  
Tel: +358 (0)9 7748 8370  
E-mail: [sirpa.huuskonen@aka.fi](mailto:sirpa.huuskonen@aka.fi)

#### France

Génoplante  
93, Rue Henri Rochefort  
91025 Evry Cedex  
Tel: +33 1 69 47 54 09

#### Germany

Dr. Catherine Kistner  
Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)  
Kennedyallee 40  
D-53175 Bonn  
Tel +49 228 885 28 03  
E-mail: [catherine.kistner@dfg.de](mailto:catherine.kistner@dfg.de)

Dr. Rainer Büschges  
Projekträger Jülich  
Forschungszentrum Jülich  
Leo-Brandt-Strasse  
D-52428 Jülich  
Tel: +49 (0) 2461 61 87 82  
E-mail: [r.bueschges@fz-juelich.de](mailto:r.bueschges@fz-juelich.de)

#### Italy

Dr. Stefano Garofoli  
c/o Dr. Riccardo Carelli  
Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della  
Ricerca (MIUR)  
P. le Kennedy 20  
00144 Roma  
Tel: +39-333-589-7755  
E-mail: [stefano.garofoli@roma1.infn.it](mailto:stefano.garofoli@roma1.infn.it)

## The Netherlands

Dr. Christine Bunthof  
Programme Manager Plant Genomics  
Netherlands Genomics Initiative  
PO Box 93035  
(Laan van Nieuw Oost Indië 300)  
NL - 2509 AA Den Haag  
Tel: +31 (0) 317 477189  
E-mail: [bunthof@genomics.nl](mailto:bunthof@genomics.nl)

## Norway

Mrs. Päivi Teivainen-Lædre  
Norges forskningsråd (RCN)  
PO Box 2700  
(St. Hanshaugen)  
N-0131 Oslo  
Tel: +47 22 03 72 06  
E-mail: [patl@rcn.no](mailto:patl@rcn.no)

## Spain

Dr. Julio Barbas  
Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (MEC)  
Paseo de la Castellana 160  
28071 Madrid  
Tel: +34 91 34 94 586  
E-mail: [julio.barbas@mec.es](mailto:julio.barbas@mec.es)

## UK

Dr. Sophie Laurie  
UK Co-ordinator for ERA-PG  
Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research  
Council (BBSRC)  
Polaris House  
North Star Avenue  
SN2 1 UH Swindon  
Tel: +44 1793 41 33 40  
E-mail: [sophie.laurie@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.laurie@bbsrc.ac.uk)