



€7 billion boost for research and innovation will create jobs and growth

- Also includes 2 initiatives with a financial support of 32M€ (208 crores INR approx), equally co-funded by EU & Government of India

Brussels, 19 July 2011 – Today Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn announced nearly €7 billion to kick-start innovation through research. The European Commission's biggest ever such funding package, under the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7), is expected to create around 174 000 jobs in the short-term and nearly 450 000 jobs and nearly €80 billion in GDP growth over 15 years¹. EU research funding is at the top of the political agenda and has now been placed at the centre of a coherent innovation strategy, the Innovation Union ([IP/10/1288](#), [MEMO/10/473](#)), which Europe needs if it is to compete with large, dynamic countries like the US and China.

Grants will promote research to tackle the biggest societal challenges facing Europe and the world. Universities, research organisations and industry will be among more than 16.000 funding recipients. Special attention will be given to SMEs, including a package close to €1 billion. There will also be a new EU Prize for Women Innovators whose work has been funded by FP7 or earlier programmes. The majority of the "calls for proposals" (invitations to bid for funds) will be published on 20 July.

"Today, Europe is again showing its commitment to putting research and innovation at the top of the political agenda for growth and jobs. EU-wide competition for these funds will bring Europe's best researchers and innovators together to tackle the biggest issues of our time, such as energy, food security, climate change and our ageing population. The Commission is proposing a significant increase in research and innovation funding for our Horizon 2020 programme post-2013 and I want to show taxpayers already with the calls we are announcing today our determination to get the best value for every euro," said Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn.

Included in these calls for proposals are two initiatives, on water research and technology, co-funded by the Government of India's Department of Science & Technology and the Department of Biotechnology. The initiatives will receive a financial support of 32M€ (208 crores INR approximately), with both sides putting in 16M€ each. The endeavour will be to address the issues pertaining to water purification, water reclamation, water reuse, the biotechnological treatment of waste water and reuse in agricultural systems.

More follows

Details on the grants

The main focus of the calls is the integration of research with innovation to tackle societal challenges and create sustainable jobs and growth by giving Europe a lead in the key technology markets of the future.

¹ based on the NEMESIS model which was developed by Prof. Paul Zagamé (Ecole Centrale Paris Erasme) as part of the European research project DEMETER.

This will be achieved by providing more support than ever before for activities that help bridge the gap between research and the market, for example by demonstrating that new technologies have commercial potential or can work on a sufficiently large scale to be industrially viable. This market-linked approach is also central to the European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs), set up under the Innovation Union action plan. Each EIP, including the pilot on Active and Healthy Ageing will be supported by FP7 projects.

In all, €220 million of the €656 million available for health research and €240 million of the €1.3 billion in funding for information and communication technology (ICT) will be allocated to work aimed at tackling the challenge of providing for an ageing population.

The rest of the ICT funding will go to key developments in network and service infrastructures, in nano-/micro-systems, photonics and robotics, in digital content and language technologies and for applications such as ICT for health and ICT for energy-efficiency.

The European Research Council (ERC) will award close to €1.6 billion to the best senior and young researchers working in Europe. To help bridge the gap between frontier research results and commercialisation, a small scale "Proof of Concept" initiative has been introduced. Another initiative is the new 'ERC Synergy Grant' to support a few small groups of researchers working together on the same project.

Around €900 million in support for researchers' mobility and careers will be provided through 'Marie Curie Actions' for around 10,000 highly-qualified researchers. This will include €20 million for a pilot project to fund "European Industrial Doctorates", to stimulate entrepreneurship and cooperation between universities, research institutions and companies.

The €265 million reserved for environment research will help address major challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss or resource efficiency.

In response to the increasing demand for safer, healthier food and sustainable bio-resources, the European Commission will invest over €307 million in building a strong bio-economy that will improve production methods, create new industries and provide jobs.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME), recognised as vital for innovation, are given special incentives to participate. In addition to newly simplified rules, the investment package of almost €1 billion for SMEs includes pilot schemes both within the Health theme and through the European Investment Bank's 'Risk-Sharing Finance Facility for SMEs.'

€488 million for nanotechnologies will focus on areas such as factories of the future, green cars and energy efficient buildings.

Research and innovation for cleaner, safer and more efficient transport and mobility will get €313 million.

Finally, the Commission sets aside €40 million for the "Smart Cities initiative" to help find more efficient ways to use energy and provide urban transport.

Background

FP7 is the largest research funding programme in the world with a budget of more than €53 billion for 2007-2013. Member States have put research and innovation at the top of the European political agenda, by adopting the Europe 2020 strategy and endorsing the Innovation Union in February this year, making it the cornerstone of plans for investment in sustainable growth and jobs.

See also [MEMO/11/520](#) and [MEMO/11/521](#)

Innovation Union: <http://ec.europa.eu/innovation-union>

Europe 2020 <http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020>

Digital Agenda ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda