

The proposal by The European Commission
to
The European Parliament and to The European Council
of
The Seventh Framework Programme
of the European Community
for
research, technological development and demonstration activities

Commentary by EAGLES
European Action on Global Life Sciences

CONSIDERED AND APPROVED BY THE STEERING COMMITTEES

EAGLES

Summary

The proposal (COM(2005) 119) of the European Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council of Ministers for **The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)** on research has been considered by committees of the **European Action on Global Life Sciences (EAGLES)**, a Task Group of The European Federation of Biotechnology (EFB).

The committees welcome the proposal that all parts and themes of FP7 will be open to cooperative activities targetted at developing and emerging economies (DECs) focusing on "their particular needs".

The draft does not however do justice to the strength and value of this commitment. The committees have concluded that FP7 needs to be substantially amended to highlight the commitment to cooperation with the DECs and to quantify it.

The draft document should contain a clearer and more coherent strategy for using European science to solve the great humanitarian problems of the DECs.

1. The "Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council" for FP7 should have a specific strong statement showing the commitment to DEC projects

and programmes. FP7 should prominently reflect and exemplify European obligations to the developing countries and the emerging economies, as for example expressed in the Millennium Development Goals. We propose a paragraph for insertion in the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council as follows:

“Recognising the commitment of the European Union to foster the campaign against poverty in the developing countries, and recognising the role of science and technology in meeting the great humanitarian challenges faced by the peoples of the developing world, especially those problems identified as the Millennium Development Goals, the Seventh Framework Programme will facilitate and encourage projects and programmes focused on hunger, illness, environmental degradation, science education and research infrastructure, and the distribution of technical information in the developing world. The Seventh Framework Programme will provide mechanisms which encourage participation by scientists, including young scientists, from developing countries. The Programme will facilitate North-South partnerships, including institutional twinning, directed at major problems afflicting the developing world. 5% of the total Seventh Framework Programme funds will be spent on projects and programmes which specifically relate to developing countries”

2. FP7 should include a greater number of examples of specific projects, programmes and mechanisms focused on problems of the developing countries. Some examples are proposed in this document.
3. The priorities should include, the discovery and provision of new, reliable and safe sources of food, water and energy, new methods for storing and distributing food, water and energy, the treatment and where possible the elimination of the major diseases including chronic diseases of the developing countries (especially through the development of novel vaccines and vaccines, novel drugs and diagnostics, and novel methods of delivery and distribution), the maintenance of air quality, the minimisation and management of waste, and the distribution of technical information to deprived rural and urban communities by ICT.
4. The EU through FP7 should provide significant resources for the education and training of scientists, the development of research infrastructure (including the support of scientists in developing countries), so that scientists can be strongly encouraged to study and work in developing countries.
5. As a rule, in our opinion, FP7 programmes should involve partnerships between scientists from Europe and from developing countries. Such programmes, though highly competitive, should be readily accessible to scientists with proven reputations.
6. A major programme within FP7 should address the social, ethical and legal aspects of the effects of European science, technology and trade policies on developing countries.

In order to emphasise the strength of the commitment of the EU to the use of science in combatting poverty, the EU should allocate 5% of the FP7 funds to DEC projects and programmes. This sum would represent an increase from 3.5% in FP6 and in absolute terms (if the new budget is approved) an increase from €600 million in FP6 to €3.6 billion in FP7.