



EPSO News n° 2 / 1 July 2007

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Note to the reader

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Editorial



Plants for the Future—Implementation of a European Strategy for Plant Research

By Uli Schurr, EPSO Member of the Steering Committee 'Plants for the Future'

The European Technology Platform (ETP) 'Plants for the Future' launched its Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) on 25 June 2007 at the European Parliament. This is yet another milestone on the road to putting plant sciences back on the agenda in Europe and its Member States. EPSO as an organisation and with the help of its members has played a crucial role in shaping this SRA. Now we need your support to implement the European SRA for plant research.

ETP 'Plants for the Future' has a short but successful history: it was established in 2004 as one of the first European technology platforms with the publication of '2025, a European vision for plant genomics and biotechnology'. This vision was signed by 21 European stakeholder organisations representing academia, farmers, industry and consumers – a clear indication of the broad impact and recognition of plant science in Europe. ETP then mobilised representatives of all stakeholders to discuss the development of a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) in their Member States.

The first impact of the SRA is already evident: 25% of Theme 2 funding for the 2007 Work Programme of the Seventh Framework Programme was dedicated to plant research. In addition, national funding programmes in a growing number of Member States now refer to SRA and ERA-NET Plant Genomics for closer collaborations with future technology platform activities.

The SRA launch is also the appropriate occasion to thank all EPSO members who have contributed to 'Plants for the Future' and Member State consultations in 19 European countries during the last few years. We are especially grateful to the former EPSO president Marc Zabeau and previous EPSO Board members Mike Bevan and Mark Stitt. Special thanks also goes to Karin Metzloff, who serves as Executive Director for both 'Plants for the Future' and EPSO, and her team for their dedicated and successful efforts in bringing European plant sciences back to the front.

Our work, however, has just started. Today, just three years after its launch, the broad representation of stakeholders in ETP 'Plants for the Future' is one of its strongest assets. The ETP continues to have an important mission in Europe, which is increasingly becoming aware of the importance of plants for its future. ETP 'Plants for the Future' belongs to the family of technology platforms that are working towards a European knowledge-based bio-economy. Joining forces with these platforms will provide the necessary momentum for plant research.

ETP 'Plants for the Future' will continue its efforts to integrate plant sciences with emerging European research strategies. ETP will use and urge to direct new financial instruments, encourage the development of national plant research platforms and become the reference point for the agricultural and plant-based sectors.

ETP 'Plants for the Future' will need your continuing support and support from its stakeholders, industry, academia and farmers, to achieve these goals. EPSO members will provide this support from the academic side. The SRA has been launched, now it must be implemented.



» Plants for the Future reaches fruition



The 'Plants for the Future' European Technology Platform (ETP) launched its final Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) at the European Parliament in Brussels on 25 June 2007. This event was hosted by MEP Giles Chichester and MEP John Purvis. Speakers were Kurt Vandenberghe (Deputy Head of Science and Research Commissioner Potočnik Cabinet), Markwart Kunz (Südzucker AG), Ricardo Serra Arias (Committee of Agricultural Organisations, COPA) and Wilhelm Grissemer (EPPO).

The SRA identifies five challenges for Europe's society and economy to which the plant sector can contribute:

- Healthy, safe and sufficient food and feed
- Plant-based products – chemical and bioenergy
- Sustainable agriculture, forestry and landscape
- Vibrant and competitive basic research
- Consumer choice and governance

Speaking at the event, EPPO President Wilhelm Grissemer said: "Europe must put its knowledge base in the field of plant science into practice to keep the European agricultural sector innovative and internationally competitive".

This technology platform is a stakeholder forum on plant genomics and biotechnology that was initiated by the European Commission in 2003. The goal of this initiative is to articulate a vision for Europe's plant agricultural sector for the short-, medium- and long-term, and to foster its implementation.

Following the publication, in 2005, of a draft SRA, Plants for the Future initiated consultations in 19 European countries, with the mirror group at the European Parliament, with members of the European Commission and via an online invitation for comments. These numerous inputs were then compiled and the platform finalised its Strategic Research Agenda.

Work will now focus on its implementation at the regional, national and European levels.

» EPPO workshop on feed value held on 26-27 June 2007 in Copenhagen, Denmark



Nearly 50 people attended the EPPO workshop on the 'Feed value chain' held on 26-27 June 2007 in Copenhagen (DK). The gathering brought together key scientists and agri-industry representatives in a successful interaction to exchange ideas on the current challenges faced by the feed-livestock value chain.

Co-organised by Claus H. Andersen (Plant Biotech Denmark), Odd Arne Rognli (Norwegian University of Life Sciences) and Vincent Pétiard (Nestlé), the workshop provided new insights into research objectives from the view of plant science and animal nutrition. The feed value chain encompasses plant breeding, feed crop production, feed formulation, as well as meat and dairy products.

The workshop programme offered high-quality presentations covering the different areas of the feed value chain, including issues of price, quality, environmental

sustainability and animal welfare. Taken together, a picture was created demonstrating the magnitude and complexity of the challenges facing the feed value chain.

One major conclusion is the need to integrate research across the value chain to harvest synergy and complement competences. A major challenge in the future will be to implement successfully chain management to achieve sustainable solutions.

A central part of the workshop was devoted to a discussion on defining prioritised research objectives with the potential to integrate different areas/disciplines across the feed-livestock value chain.

"This is a golden chance to put together a consortium to address all the issues along the feed value chain," said Julian Wiseman from the University of Nottingham, UK.

A working group to prepare a draft white paper and formulate the prioritised research objectives was formed. The white paper is expected by end of September 2007 and a final version by the end of October 2007.

» EPPO personal membership opens 1 July 2007: register now!

Thus far, EPPO has offered institutional membership, i.e. to institutes, universities, departments or research units. Starting on 1 July 2007, EPPO will offer membership to individual persons interested in plant science. This opportunity is open to all nationalities, professions, career stages and age groups worldwide.

Individuals with a personal membership will have access to all the benefits currently enjoyed by institutional members, such as access to the FP7 online broker (especially the FP7 partner finding tool), to the directory of plant scientists, to the EPPO online portal. In addition, there are benefits restricted

to personal members, such as the bi-monthly newsletter, eligibility to apply for an EPPO conference support grant and to apply for a tutor providing insights into their home country/continent.

Every 500 personal memberships will have one representative at the annual general meeting. Personal members can elect one representative to join the EPPO board (the other members of which are elected by the General Assembly).

A personal membership fee applies, according to the career stage. The fee is waived for individuals working in an EPPO member institute or university.

Interested? Go to the EPPO website and register.

» Programme of the 2008 EPSO Conference now available



The programme of the 4th EPSO Conference that will take place in Presqu'île de Giens (near Toulon), France, on 22-26 June 2008 is now available online.

The theme of the conference is 'Plants for Life'. Scientists from Europe and other continents will present and discuss cutting edge science. Together with non-plant scientists they will build an interface to new areas.

The conference is organised by Karin Metzclaff, EPSO Executive Director, and the local conference organiser is Hélène Lucas, Head of Genetics and Plant Breeding division, INRA, France.

Confirmed speakers by 29 June 2007 are: Birgitte K. Ahring, Claus Andersen, Ian Bancroft, Michael Bevan, Dirk Bosch, Inge Broer, Enrico Coen, Catherine Feuillet, Chris Field, Richard B. Flavell, Andrew D. Friend, Yuri Gleba, Wilhelm Gruitens, Marion Guillou, Luis Herrera Estrella, Stephen Hopper, Jonathan Jones, Sophien Kamoun, Jay D. Keasling, Peter Langridge, Ottoline Leyser, Joachim Messing, Franco Miglietta, Graham Moore, Javier Paz-Ares, Kaisa Poutanen, Martin Qaim, Rudy Rabbinge, Roberto Ranieri, Mark Stitt, Björn Sundberg, Frank Takken, François Tardieu, Wim Van Camp, Nicolaus von Wirén, Lothar Willmitzer, Jian-Kang Zhu.

Read the next issues of *EPSO News* to stay informed about this major event organised by EPSO.

» EPSO to participate in research infrastructures conference

On 13-14 September 2007, the European Life Sciences Forum (ELSF) is organising, jointly with the European Science Foundation (ESF), a conference entitled 'Research Infrastructures for the Life Sciences', which will be held in the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium.

EPSO encourages any of its members who have expertise in research infrastructure to attend this major event in order to contribute effectively to this crucial debate. Registration is open until 15 July 2007. There is no registration fee but the number of participant is restricted due to the capacity of the venue.

Infrastructures are indispensable instruments for supporting research in the modern life sciences. However, in Europe, they often constitute a limiting factor due to lack of mechanisms available for their coordinated organisation and funding. Following the release of the recent European Strategic Forum on Research Infrastructure's (ESFRI) road map, which presents a list of priorities for the area, several issues remain unresolved.

This meeting will enable the opinion of the broad life science community on future requirements to be heard. A science policy briefing will be produced following the conference.

» EPSO members to comment on Cologne paper

Members of EPSO and of the Technology Platform 'Plants for the Future', as part of experts from academia and industry, were invited to contribute to an expert paper outlining the perspectives of the Knowledge-Based Bio-Economy (KBBE) within the next 20 years. KBBE can be defined as "transforming life sciences knowledge into new, sustainable, eco-efficient and competitive products".

EPSO encourages its members to send feed-back on the Cologne paper to the EPSO office. The inputs will be compiled and presented to the authors of the Cologne paper as a reply from EPSO.

The so-called 'Cologne Paper' was published on 30 May 2007 in Cologne at the European Bio-Perspectives Conference 'En Route to the Knowledge-Based Bio-Economy' hosted by the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It presents the findings of six workshops held between January and March 2007 on the following topics: framework issues, food, biomaterials and bioprocesses, bioenergy, biomedicine, and new concepts and emerging technologies.

The visions, forecasts and recommendations presented are intended to assist policy-makers in identifying priorities and adopting measures.

» EPSO took part in energy consultation

On 13 May 2005, EPSO provided input for a European Commission public consultation on the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan). This plan, currently at an early stage of its preparation, aims to accelerate the market introduction and take-up of low-carbon and efficient energy technologies.

EPSO expressed its view that an integrated approach was needed, combining research, technology transfer, policy, regulatory activities and the appropriate resources. It strongly stressed the necessity to bring together existing and

foreseen activities and to lift them up to a higher level to reach critical mass and boost Europe's competitiveness.

Plant sciences have a key role to play in areas such as higher biomass production, improved processability of biomass, enhanced resource use efficiency, and the increased genetic diversity of bio-energy plants.

Over 600 responses have been submitted and are currently being analysed. A report on the findings of the consultation will soon be published by the EC.



These contributions were submitted by EPSO members. The instructions for submitting contributions are on the EPSO website. Send us your articles at contact-epsonews@epsomail.org. Deadline for submitting articles for the next issue is 31 August 2007.

» EPSO welcomes a new member: Bioforsk, Norway



Bioforsk – the Norwegian Institute for Agricultural and Environmental Research – is a research and development (R&D) institute under the auspices of the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The institute has a staff of approximately 500 and an annual turnover of some €45 million.

Bioforsk broadly specialises in the natural sciences. It performs research, consultancy, development and communication activities within three major fields of expertise: sustainable agriculture and rural development; plant science, plant protection and food safety; environmental protection and natural resources management.

Bioforsk's competence and capacity building support is targeted at creating solutions for farmers and food producers, local, regional and national authorities, and scientists. This includes the development and application of tools and models for decision-making and management of agri-environmental challenges. Bioforsk's main objective is to

contribute to productivity and economic viability through the sustainable use and management of natural resources.

Bioforsk is still very young. It was established at the beginning of 2006. The institute consists of seven research divisions located in different parts of the country, in addition to the central administration. The divisions cover plant health and plant protection; soil and the environment; organic food and farming; arable crops; horticulture and urban greening; grassland and landscape; and Arctic farming and land use.

Plant health and plant protection constitute a particularly strong basis for Bioforsk's plant science competence, covering weeds, pests and diseases in major crops. Strategies to control weeds, pests and diseases that can be applied in organic and in conventional production system have been emphasised. The institute also supports the decision-making processes of producers, the authorities and managers.

For more information: Bioforsk website <http://www.bioforsk.no>

Contact person: Dr. Ellen Merethe Magnus

» ERA-PG funds 29 transnational research projects through the first joint call



With a final budget of over €35 million, the ERA-NET Plant Genomics (ERA-PG) partners decided, in May 2007, to fund 29 projects out of the 106 that were submitted in March 2006 in response to their first joint call. This joint call provided researchers with the opportunity to take part in transnational collaborations within overarching plant genomics themes, either through academic or public-private partnerships.

The purpose of ERA-PG is to strengthen Europe's knowledge base and competitiveness in plant genomics. The call, launched on 1 February 2006, was addressed to plant genomic researchers in Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The selection followed a two-stage procedure. First, the projects were selected and proposed to the funding institutions by a scientific advisory committee. Second, international experts selected evaluated the full proposals through a peer review process. Then, a ranking list was submitted to the national funding agencies, which made the

final decisions.

The selected projects will start in the coming months. A first grant-holders workshop will be held during the Plant Genomics European meeting, at Tenerife on 2 October 2007.

Grants were awarded using a 'Jointly Administrated Pot' model. In this model there is one central secretariat; evaluation and selection are centrally organised following commonly agreed procedures. Consortium agreements and intellectual property rights conditions are developed transnationally while the funding follows national rules. Each national funding organisation funds only the research consortium members from its own country.

The ERA-PG partners are exploring further possibilities for continuing their collaboration and have started preparations to open a second call in 2008. ERA-PG is an EU-funded network which seeks to boost transnational co-operation.

For more information and the list of selected projects: ERA-PG website <http://www.erapg.org>

Contact person: Dr. Christine J Bunthof, ERA-PG managing office.

» Brainstorming plant genomics

The future of plant genomic research will be the topic of discussion at a special session organised by the ERA-NET Plant Genomics (ERA-PG) network later this year. This gathering will take place during the next Plant Genomics European meeting in Tenerife (Spain), on 4 October 2007.

Representatives of world leading research institutions, companies, European and international programmes, as well as policy-makers will be brought together to identify new opportunities and challenges for the European Research Area in plant genomics and potential international collaboration opportunities between Europe and the rest of the world. An important goal is to raise awareness of the fact that the success of genomics programmes, notably in plants,

greatly depends on global co-operation.

The participants will address the following issues: the knowledge-based bio-economy, plants for tomorrow, biofuel production, green chemistry and plant pathologies. The recommendations resulting from their discussions will be forwarded to all the funding agencies participating in ERA-PG in order to help them draw new priorities for transnational research.

This meeting is part of a new phase of the ERA-PG project, started in 2007 and lead by France, which is entitled 'Structuring the future'.

For more information: ERA-PG website <http://www.erapg.org>

Contact person: Bernard Strée, French ERA-PG coordinator



» FP7's People programme: focus on career development, training and mobility



careers development in science by encouraging the international mobility of researchers, training and best working practices.

Two key policy documents

Adopted by the European commission in March 2005, the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers are two key policy documents and represent a synthesis of the philosophy on which all the MC Actions are based.

Ten Marie Curie Actions

Marie Curie Actions are the tools to implement the Charter and the Code. They address researchers – both European and non-European – at all stages of their professional lives, from initial research training to career development, in the public and private sectors, in all disciplines and field of research.

When submitting a proposal, it is essential to understand the policy principles and the goal of each action clearly in order to increase your chances of success.

Five funding schemes are available under the People programme.

1- Initial training networks (ITN)

This action accounts for 40% of the overall budget of the MC Actions, i.e. €240 million in 2007, and provides support for the recruitment of early stage researchers (in the first five years of their careers) in transnational networks for up to four years. Networks, involving at least three partners from at least two EU states, should submit a joint research training programme focused on the initial training of junior researchers.

Key elements for a proposal to be successful are: the quality of supervision, the complementary training offered (such as project management, proposal writing, communication, etc.) and the presence of a private partner in the network.

The closing date for the submission of proposals in 2007 was 7 May, by which time close to 1000 proposals were received by the Commission. It is estimated that about 100 networks will be financed.

2- Life-long training and career development for experienced researchers

This scheme, comprising three MC Actions, provides support for individual projects and focuses on career development of experienced researchers (having at least four years of full-time research experience or a PhD).

- Intra-European Fellowships for Career Development (IEF) supports training and intra-European mobility. The key

element here is the acquisition of new research skills. Support is provided for up to two years. The next deadline is 14 August 2007. It is expected that approximately 450 fellowships will be awarded.

- European Reintegration Grants (ERG) are aimed at researchers wishing to return to Europe after a stay abroad within the MC Actions. The grant covers a period of two to three years. Applications can be submitted at any time, the next cut-of date being 17 October 2007.
- Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (COFUND) is a new action aiming at exporting the best practices and the basic principles driving all the MC Actions to other programmes (existing or new; regional, national or international). To be successful, a programme should be transnational and should contain mobility schemes, training elements, and reintegration tools. The deadline for submission of proposals is expected to be 17 October 2007 (the call is not yet published).

3- Industry-academia partnerships and pathways (IAAP)

This action aims at increasing the collaboration between the private and public sector and provides support for co-operation programmes (for up to four years) involving at least one organisation from each sector, from at least two different states. Support is provided for staff exchange between the partners. The deadline for submission of proposal was 31 May 2007. It is expected that about 50 projects will be funded.

4- International dimension

These three actions encourage the international dimension of career development of EU researchers and attract researchers from outside Europe.

- International Outgoing Fellowships for Career Development (IOF) focuses on the outgoing mobility and subsequent return to Europe of European researchers. This is one of the most competitive actions, with a success rate of about 10%. In 2007, it is expected that close to 150 fellowships will be awarded. The deadline for proposals is 14 August 2007.
- International Incoming Fellowships (IIF) focuses on the incoming mobility of researchers from third countries wishing to work on research projects in Europe. The deadline for submission of projects is 14 August 2007. About 200 fellowships will be awarded.
- International Reintegration Grants (IRG) supports the return to Europe, after at least three years abroad, of EU researchers. Recently, this action has been particularly popular with researchers from the new Members States. It provides a flat-rate contribution of €25 000 a year for up to four years. Applications can be submitted at any time, the next cut-of date being 17 October 2007.

5- Specific actions

- Researchers' Night (NIGHT) funds the organisation of festive events to bridge the gap between researchers and the general public. Next call for proposals is expected to be 28 February 2008.
- Marie Curie Awards (AWARDS). Five prizes of €50 000 are awarded per year. Candidates for the prizes can apply directly or can be nominated by others. The call date for 2008 has not yet been published.

Removing obstacles to mobility and career development

The European Researcher's Mobility Portal is a website containing hundreds of job opportunities for researchers, gathered from numerous research institutions throughout Europe. It offers access to some 30 national job portals built on the same principle. The addresses of all these job sites are available on the EPSO portal.

ERA-MORE is a network of 200 European mobility centres in 33 countries providing concrete assistance to researchers and their family in all matters relating to professional and daily life in a host country.

ERA-Link is a pilot initiative set up in the USA to develop the European scientific diaspora there. It is a network of

European researchers throughout the US providing targeted information on research in Europe (policy, funding, jobs, news). This action will be further developed in the coming years, notably in Japan and China.

A Scientific Visa concept is currently under implementation following a 2005 European Council directive. This visa is a major legislative step to facilitate the entry into Europe of non-European researchers. It also allows free movement within the EU.

More information on the Marie Curie Actions and FP7 is available on the EPSO website.

EPSO members wishing to receive a presentation/discussion on FP7 within their institution or country can contact us to arrange it.

Upcoming FP7 deadlines

17 July 2007

Capacities – Science in Society – Descartes prizes for transnational collaborative research and Prizes for science communication

31 July 2007 – Co-operation – Calls for grants for action of a horizontal nature or not directly linked to a specific Co-operation theme will be available through support to ERA-NET actions.

14 August 2007 – People

Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowships for Career Development (IEF)

Marie Curie International Outgoing Fellowships for Career Development (IOF)

Marie Curie International Incoming Fellowships (IIF)

24 August 2007 – People

Transnational collaboration among ERA-MORE members (ERAMORE)

Transnational cooperation among National Contact Points (NPC)

04 September 2007 – Capacities – Research for the benefit of SMEs

11 September 2007 – Co-operation – Calls for large collaborative projects under Theme 2 – Stage 1

11 September 2007 – Capacities – Activities of International Cooperation

17 September 2007 – Ideas – ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant – Stage 2 (full proposal only for proposals retained at stage 1)

20 September 2007 – Capacities – Research Infrastructures

25 September 2007 – People – Initial training networks (ITN) – Stage 2 (full proposal only for proposals retained at stage 1)

17 October 2007 – People

Marie Curie European Reintegration Grants (ERG)

Marie Curie International Reintegration Grants (IRG)

Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (COFUND) (the date is expected to be confirmed in the coming weeks, the call has not yet been published)

28 February 2008 – People

Researchers' Night (NIGHT). The call has not yet been published.

FP7 model consortium agreement tool now online

The first operational version of DESCAs, the simplified FP7 model consortium agreement was released on 22 June. DESCAs is a comprehensive, modular consortium agreement for FP7. It was initiated by key FP7 stakeholder groups and co-developed with the FP community.

This tool offers a frame of reference which seeks to balance the interests of all of the main participant categories in FP7 research projects: large and small firms, universities, public research institutes, and research and technology organisations.



National Research Funding Opportunities

Panorama of Plant Research Funding Opportunities in France



France's R&D expenditures accounted for €35.5 billion in 2004 (of which 46% was funded by the public sector), representing 2.1% of GDP, placing the country in third place, in terms of GDP, among EU Member States.

Public research organisations, universities and other higher education institutions, and private companies carry out research. Among the numerous public

research organisations, five are involved in plant science research: National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS); National Institute for Agronomic Research (INRA); Centre for International Co-operation in Agronomic Research (CIRAD); National centre for Agriculture and Environmental Engineering Research (CEMAGREF); Research Institute for Development (IRD). Plant research is also carried out at universities and higher education institutions, such as the École normale supérieure in Paris and Lyon.

At the governmental level, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research coordinates French research policy.

The new National Agency of Research

Recent development in public research policies have seen the creation of a new body, in 2005, the National Agency of Research (ANR), which funds research projects on specific thematic areas, the two relevant to plant science being: biology and health, ecosystems and sustainable development. Funding is mainly available for French research teams, but "it is also possible for foreign partners to participate, providing that they supply their own funding".

Under the 'ecosystems and sustainable development' thematic area, plant genomic research is carried out through the Génoplante 2010 programme. Created in 1999, this programme is currently in its third phase (2005-2010), and involves seven members from the public (CNRS, INRA, CIRAD and IRD) and private (Biogemma, Arvalis and Sofiproteol) plant science sectors. The annual budget amounts to €30 million, including €12 million in the form of grants from the ANR. Génoplante carries out joint research projects with other European plant genomic programmes, such as GABI in Germany and the Spanish plant genomics programme.

Strengthening the international dimension of French research

Each public research organisation has developed its own tools to attract international researchers or to support transnational research projects.

INRA's 'Scientific package' scheme aims to attract high-level researchers to its best units by funding research projects led by invited researchers for a duration of up to four years. The deadline for submission of proposals is 15 November 2007.

Since 17 years, CNRS has a specific program to attract new scientists: the ATIP program 'Young Scientists' funded by the Life Science Division. It offers the opportunity to young scientists (all nationalities, no holder than 40) to develop an independent research project while setting up their own group within a CNRS laboratory. Support is available for 3 years, with a possibility of two-year extension. Applicants should submit a scientific project and are encouraged to propose a host laboratory. A list of laboratories, several of them working on plants, wishing to welcome a team is available on the CNRS website. Deadline for application is 1 October 2007.

» Upcoming French calls open to transnational applicants

31 July 07: INRA – Post-doctoral fellowships

1 October 2007: CNRS – ATIP Young Scientists Programme

15 November 07: INRA – Scientific Package

Beginning 2008: Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Eiffel PhD scholarships. Specific date to be announced later in the year.

31 March 2008: CNRS - International Programs for Scientific Cooperation

Continuous application:

- CNRS: European Associated Laboratory / International Associated Laboratory

Another recent initiative aimed at strengthening the international dimension of French research is the creation of advanced thematic research networks. Among the 13 networks selected in October 2006, one located in Montpellier (southern France) 'Agricultural research and sustainable development' regroups 30 research groups from CIRAD, INRA and SupAgro (a higher education entity) working on plant science. The network seeks to play a major role on the international stage and will receive funding from the government for international collaborative research projects in the coming years.

Bilateral programmes funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs finances several bilateral funding programmes, such as the Hubert Curien Partnerships which provide financing for short missions between the partners – either INRA or CNRS – and a foreign research entity. These programmes are run by the management organisation Egide (the French Agency for International Mobility). Call dates vary from partnership to partnership.

Other funding opportunities open to foreign applicants

Since 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been offering Eiffel Doctoral Scholarships aimed at high-level foreign students wanting to pursue their doctorate in France. In 2007, 76 scholarships were awarded. The next call is expected to be published at the end of the year and will be posted on the Egide website.

PhD fellowships are also offered by individual universities and public research organisations, most of them are open to foreign applicants. There is no centralised entity managing all these funding opportunities, making it quiet difficult for foreign applicants to find their way. Good source of information (although sometimes only in French) on those sources of funding are Egide, the French PhD organisation ANDES, the Bernard Gregory Association and France Contact, to name a few.

More information on funding opportunities in France is available on the EPSO website. As the information provided in EPSO News and on the website can only supply a selection of opportunities, EPSO is happy to receive further and updated information for distribution.

- CNRS: European Research Groups / International Research Groups
- CNRS: International Joint Units

Programmes with call dates varying form country to country:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Hubert Curien partnerships (bilateral)
- CNRS – Bilateral researcher exchanges
- INRA – International Scientific Cooperation (bilateral or trilateral programmes)

Deadline for submitting ideas and articles for the next issue of EPSO News is 31 August 2007



Upcoming Meetings

Plants for Human Health in Post-genomics Era

26-29 August 2007 – Helsinki, Finland

Rhizosphere 2

26-31 August 2007 – Montpellier, France

Frontiers in Phytohormone Science

10-11 September 2007 – Lausanne, Switzerland

Advances in Virology

11-12 September 2007 – Greenwich, UK

Plant Nematology Workshop

11-13 September 2007 – Belfast, UK

4th Tri-National Arabidopsis Meeting

12-15 September 2007 – Vienna, Austria

Research Infrastructures for the Life Sciences

13-14 September 2007 – Brussels, Belgium

Advances in Pest Management

11 October 2007 - Warwickshire, UK

Genomics Momentum 2007 - Eye on Genomics

28 November 2007 – Amsterdam, The Netherlands

6th European Conference on Grain Legumes

12-16 November 2007 – Lisbon, Portugal

Theoretical Population Ecology and Practical Biocontrol

5-6 December 2007 - Warwickshire, UK

Advances in Nematology

11 December 2007 – London, UK

You can find a more complete list of meetings on the EPSO website. Would you like to announce your meeting in *EPSO News*? Go to the EPSO website.



Career Opportunities

Postdoctoral position, INRA, Dijon, France

Postdoctoral position, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Postdoctoral position, INRA, Montpellier, France

Research Coordinator, Biogemma, Clermont-Ferrand, France

Postdoctoral position, INRA, Nantes, France

Technology Licensing Managers, Bayer Bioscience, Ghent, Belgium

Postdoctoral position, INRA, Avignon, France

Three Postdoctoral Fellows, Plant Systems Biology, Ghent University, Belgium

More information on these positions is available on the EPSO website. Would you like to place your job advert in *EPSO News*? Go to the EPSO website.



EPSO in numbers

- 24 European countries
- 58 institutional members
- 137 research institutes, universities, research departments
- More than 20 000 people working in plant science, among which:
 - 8 000 scientists
 - 4 000 PhD students
 - 7 500 undergraduates



How to receive *EPSO News*?

The next issues of *EPSO News* will only be sent to EPSO members.

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FP7 partner finding tool

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