

Press release: ERA-IB 5th call

Brussels, 31 January 2014 – ERA-IB launches a fifth international joint call for multilateral research projects using Industrial Biotechnology (IB). ERA-IB, an ERA-NET started within the European Framework Programmes for research and technical development, joins forces with the ERA-NET EuroTransBio (ETB). Through collaboration of these two ERA-NETs in a joint call, more funding will be available and the geographical coverage is expanded. The main purpose of the call is to generate joint European research and development activities and to stimulate and unify researchers and academics who specialise in IB to work closely together and share funding and research projects.

The following ERA-IB partner organisations will participate in the call and will fund one or more projects: Agentschap voor Innovatie door Wetenschap en Technologie (IWT) Belgium (also partner in ETB); Styrelsen for Forskning og Innovation (DASTI) Denmark; Agence de l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Energie (ADEME) France; Fachagentur Nachwachsende Rohstoffe (FNR) Germany; Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) Germany (also partner in ETB); Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO) Netherlands; Norges forskningsråd (RCN) Norway; Narodowe Centrum Badań i Rozwoju (NCBiR) Poland; Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) Portugal; Unitatea Executiva pentru Finanțarea Invatamantului Superior, a Cercetării, Dezvoltării și Inovării (UEFISCDI) Romania; Фонд содействия развитию малых форм предприятий в научно-технической сфере (Foundation for Assistance to Small Innovative Enterprises) (FASIE) Russia (also partner in ETB); Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (MINECO), Spain; Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu (TUBITAK) Turkey; Technology Strategy Board (TSB) United Kingdom; and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) United Kingdom.

Under the umbrella of ETB, these partners will participate in the 5th joint call: die Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft (FFG) Austria; Service public de Wallonie, Direction générale opérationnelle de l'Économie, de l'Emploi et de la Recherche (SPW-DGO6) Belgium; Tekes palvelee suomalaisen elinkeinoelämän ja tutkimuksen uudistumista (Tekes) Finland; and Agencia de Innovación y Desarrollo de Andalucía (IDEA) Spain.

Call regulation

Joint projects must have a minimum of three and maximum of eight participants from a minimum of three different ERA-IB-2 and/or EuroTransBio partner countries. The participation of an industrial partner in the consortium is mandatory. Submissions of proposals will be in two steps: pre-proposal and full proposal. The deadline for submitting pre-proposals is the 31st of March 2014 and full proposals must be submitted by the 30th of June 2014. Projects are expected to start in early 2015.

Call topics

The call covers the following: 'Industrial biotechnology for Europe: an integrated approach'.

Funding is available to fund innovative industrially relevant research and development projects on one or more of the following topics:

Processes

- Conversion of industrial by-products and biomass into value-added products
- Novel systems for new, more sustainable processes (bio-catalysts such as enzymes, micro-organism and cell-free biosynthesis systems)

- New compounds from existing, but not well studied biological systems, by understanding their metabolic pathways
- Modelling and optimisation of biological unit operations / modelling for the improvement of cellular bio-processes
- Process development, intensification and/or integration in existing industrial processes (e.g. downstream and scale-up, process design, scalability)

Products/markets

- Development of new functional materials / properties from renewable resources
- Development of platform chemicals including bio-monomers, oligomers and polymers
- Biomaterials, pharmaceuticals, functional food/feed ingredients *

Function-based bio-products: from function to process

- Function-based bio-products and bio-process design

*Please, check national/regional regulations since some of these topics may be not suitable for all agencies.

Projects are also required to assess environmental impacts.

Previous calls

ERA-IB has already launched four joint calls. The first call was launched in 2008 and resulted in eight financed projects, for a total budget of 9.7 million EUR. The second call (2010) resulted in ten projects for a total budget of 11.1 million EUR. In 2012 we launched the third call which resulted in twelve granted projects out of 33 submissions for a total budget of 18 million EURO. The latest call in 2013 was also in collaboration with ETB and resulted in eight projects recommended for funding.

Link to the call documents: www.era-ib.net/call-documents-5thCall

Link tot ERA-IB-2: www.era-ib.net

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Notes to Editors:

ERA-IB-2 is an ERA-NET funded by the European Commission, while ETB is nowadays a self-sustained network. An ERA-NET provides a framework where coordination between national and regional research programmes can be developed and strengthened.

ERA-IB started as an ERA-NET funded under the European Commission's sixth Framework Programme (FP6). In 2011, ERA-IB-2 built on the success of the preceding project of ERA-IB. It is a four-year programme funded under the European Commissions' 7th Framework Programme (FP7), EU's main instrument for funding research in Europe. The objective of the ERA-NET scheme is to step up the cooperation and coordination of research and development activities carried out at national or regional level in the Member States and Associated States.

ERA-IB-2 brings together 18 research programme funding and/or management organisations in 14 countries with important activities in the field of IB, aiming at coordinating national and regional funding programmes in the field of Industrial Biotechnology. The network is a continuation of the first ERA-IB awarded through the 6th Framework Programme, which had 17 partners from 12 countries, during its life from 2006 to 2011.

The key mission of ERA-IB is to contribute to a European knowledge-based bio-economy (KBBE) by reducing fragmentation in IB R&D funding and by fostering the exchange of knowledge across borders, and to increase cost-effectiveness by pooling resources and optimising mechanisms for joint calls. The KBBE is the tool to achieving sustainable economic growth in Europe, as it will lead to sustainable, environmentally sound industrial processes and products which substitute fossil resources with bio-based (renewable) raw materials. Industrial Biotechnology will be one of the key technologies of this KBBE, and ERA-IB will ensure Europe makes full use of her potential by identifying IB-related R&D needs through stakeholder dialogue and responding to these needs with coordinated, joint actions (joint calls).

ETB was also funded through the Framework Programme and continues as a self-sustained network since the end of the funded phase. It is a joint initiative of ten research programme funding and/or management organisations with a focus on industrial research especially of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) collaborating in the field of modern biotechnology. It is therefore a preferred funding instrument for SMEs.