

ESF Forward Looks

2005 Call for Proposals

The European Science Foundation is pleased to announce a Call for Proposals for Forward Looks

Deadline: 24.00hrs CET on September 23rd 2005.

ESF Forward Looks are an instrument which enables Europe's scientific community, in interaction with policy makers from ESF Member Organisations and other organisations, to develop medium to long-term views and analyses of future research developments with the aim of defining research agendas and priorities. The purpose of a Forward Look is to bring together in a global context scientific foresight and priority setting for research funding at national and European levels.

Depending on the ESF budget for 2006 it is envisaged that between 2 and 5 proposals will be funded within this Call.

As the major part of the activities within the Forward Look proposals selected in 2005 should take place before the end of 2006, a strong commitment is required from the proposing team to run the process in a tight time schedule.

Rationale

It is becoming increasingly important that the science community and funding agencies at both national and European levels are aware of the potential directions research will take in the future, especially as traditional disciplines combine to produce new and exciting multidisciplinary areas of study. Using the outputs of a Forward Look, agencies will be better able to plan their resources to meet possible future demand, including the development of new facilities and infrastructure which may take a considerable lead time before becoming operational. Foresight exercises also help the development of pan-European approaches by Member Organisations and other national agencies as well as informing European institutions such as the European Commission and ESF itself.

Bringing together the best ideas and capabilities is essential to achieve this aim. To be accepted by their scientific peers, a gathering of Europe's key scientific "actors" in any given topic must aim at an assessment and recommendations of the highest scientific quality. Such an activity needs to balance assessments of 'state of the art' with looking ahead. Although research is unpredictable, a Forward Look will aim to provide a guide and reference for all concerned, in setting new directions and priorities for European science.

Format

A Forward Look is essentially a systematic and high level, **priority setting** exercise. It takes into account the state of the art in a given domain, and uses this as a point of departure for **looking ahead**, typically **over a period of 5-10 years**. It is science driven, but includes, as appropriate, the **societal dimension** as an essential element of context.

It is up to the applicants to propose the format and methodology most appropriate for their topic. The following activities could be included:

- Establishment of specialist preparatory study groups (or the utilisation of existing expert groups and panels)
- Commissioning of high level overview papers
- Workshops, seminars etc.

One of the proposed events should be a conference with high visibility. While most participants will be leading scientists from academia - and industry if appropriate - the presence of policy makers, such as those responsible in Member Organisations for developing forward plans, priorities and providing resources, will be very important. Representatives from bodies such as the European Commission, and other European research institutions should also be invited. As science is a global activity by nature, involvement of leading non European scientists is essential for developing a comprehensive vision.

The project will be managed by an Organising Committee. ESF and the Scientific Standing Committees will be closely involved in the management process via their representative(s) on the Organising Committee.

Outputs

It is envisaged that each Forward Look will produce a major report which can provide a reference for the future. Action Plans may also be expected in order to set research goals and means of implementation. In order to enable rapid circulation of the summarised outcomes of a Forward Look, a publication of an ESF Policy Briefing shortly after the final meeting is highly desirable. The report should include a balanced analysis of the scientific domain concerned, with an indication of potential 'hot topics', as well as lines of research less likely to move the topic forward; it should also present European strengths and weaknesses in a global context.

Recommendations should include the identification of priorities for research and investments in research infrastructure, needs for European scientific cooperation and the potential for cooperation with strong scientific communities outside of Europe. Recommendations for action of identified actors (ESF, EC, others) would increase the likely impact.

Funding

ESF will fund a Forward Look at a level of up to 150 k yet encourages the proposing team to seek external funding, up to one third of the total cost, from potential 'clients' of the Forward Look.

Eligibility

A proposing team should include scientists from countries within ESF membership and / or representatives from ESF Member Organisations. There are no requirements as to the number of participating countries but the proposers should ensure a European dimension to the proposal.

Assessment procedure

Proposals will be reviewed and ranked by the relevant ESF Standing Committees, taking expert advice as required. The final selection will be made, based on this ranking, by a special committee nominated by the ESF Executive Board which will recommend to the Executive Board the proposals to be funded.

Applicants will be notified of the results by the end of November, when they will also receive feedback on their proposals.

Submission guidelines

Proposals should be made to flook@esf.org no later than **24.00hrs CET on September 23rd 2005**. First submissions will be considered final (no revisions accepted).

There is no specific application form but the proposal must provide the information requested below. Proposals must be in English, and should include:

- Proposed Title
- Name and contact details of the Principal Applicant
- Keywords related to the topic of the proposal (up to 5; one “keyword” can be a string of not more than 3 words)
- An abstract (max.100 words)
- The case for a Forward Look including:
 - Rationale: justify the need to hold a Forward Look activity in the area(s) concerned, explain the importance of the topic and issues in the 5-10+ year timeframe
 - State of the Art: describe current situation in the area(s) concerned, define questions to be addressed, justify why a Forward Look would be timely.
 - Objectives: measurable outcomes of the project
- Target groups; scientifically and politically (ESF Member Organisations and other agencies, the European Commission etc)
- Budget proposal (in Euros) indicating the breakdown by activity and type of expenditure; indicate the award requested from ESF and any financial support awarded or foreseen from other sources.
- Tentative Organising Committee: names and affiliations (max 6 members).
- Tentative Schedule of activities and their format.

In addition, a short CV of up to 3 pages of the Principal Applicant should be included.

Submission format

- The proposal (not including CV) should not exceed 6 pages
- **Applications** (including CV) should be **prepared as 1 document only in Word, or rtf format.**
- All margins should be at least 3 cm and headers and footers not less than 2 cm.
- Font size must be no smaller than 10.

Contacts

Further information can be obtained by consulting the general ESF Forward Looks page




Or by contacting:

for scientific queries:

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for general queries

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