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Briefing: The EU's Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7): 2012 Health Work Programme: Calls for proposals

Summary

On 20 July 2012 the European Commission published the 2012 Health Work Programme which includes health-related projects to be funded under the European Union's (EU) Research Framework Programme.

This briefing is intended to inform NHS organisations of the EU's Research Framework Programme, give an overview of the key topics for funding relevant to the NHS, and advise how to apply for funding. Contact details and key website links are also provided for further information.

NHS organisations interested in participating in an EU project are advised to consult the European Commission's website, and contact the NHS European Office to discuss their participation.

What is the EU's Research Framework Programme?

The research activities of the European Union (EU) are grouped into an overarching Research Framework Programme. The current Framework Programme, known as the Seventh Research Framework Programme (FP7), is the EU's main instrument for funding research and runs for the period 2007 - 2013.

It has two main objectives:

- to strengthen the scientific and technological base of European industry; and
- to encourage international competitiveness, while promoting research that supports EU policies.

The Programme is comprised of four different blocks: 'cooperation', 'ideas', 'people', and 'capacities'. These include the following areas:

- Cooperation: funding for projects on themes which include **health**, biotechnology, ICT, energy, nanotechnologies and socio-economic sciences and humanities;
- Ideas: funding for the European Research Council (an independent scientific council);
- People: funding for actions which focus on the training and mobility of researchers;
- Capacities: funding for projects on research infrastructures, research for the benefit of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and initiatives aiming to strengthen the research potential of European regions.

The levels of funding for the different themes vary. The **health theme** has been allocated **€6.1 billion for 2007 to 2013** and covers a range of health topics including specific disease areas such as cancer, respiratory diseases and cardiovascular disease, emerging epidemics,

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diagnostics and delivery of health services. There are also other topics in other parts of FP7 that are relevant to the NHS, e.g. in the FP7 ICT work programme. These are not covered in this briefing, however details of these may be found at: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/>

Key areas for NHS organisations: the focus for funding in 2012

The total budget allocation for health in 2012 is the biggest so far at €656 million.

Active and healthy ageing is an overarching theme for 2012 and a significant part of the funding under this year's health work programme will support the EU's pilot [European Innovation Partnership on active and healthy ageing](#).

In addition, in order to give greater impact to the outcomes of the priorities listed below, a number of cross-cutting themes have been identified to complement these areas, including personalised and regenerative medicines, systems biology and –omics, HIV/AIDs, Malaria and TB, healthcare delivery, and coordination and support activities.

Some of the main priority areas for the 2012 Health Work Programme are:

- **Active and healthy ageing:**

Supporting the goals of the active and healthy ageing European Innovation Partnership (EIP) is a major focus of the health call, including ageing-related research into medical technologies in relation to detection, diagnosis & monitoring, innovative therapies, large-scale data gathering, systems biology, human development and ageing, chronic diseases, healthcare systems, support actions, and clinical trials including elderly patients.

- **SME relevant research**

Promoting innovation by strengthening the links between academia and industry is another priority for this work programme. A number of topics under this theme, such as medical technologies, are specifically targeted at SMEs, and SMEs are encouraged to lead projects for several topics. There is also a new pilot SME innovation call.

NHS organisations may wish to consider working with SMEs in collaborative projects to increase the attractiveness of their bid.

- **Medical technologies**

Focusing on organ transplantation and artificial organs, diagnostics for infectious diseases, management of diabetes, sensory impairment, chronic inflammatory disease, and health technology assessments are priorities for this area.

- **Rare diseases**

Projects that aim to develop new technologies for diagnosis and treatment, or develop new drugs to deal with rare diseases will be included under this priority. Projects will focus on using –omics technologies for better diagnosis and treatment, as well as pre-clinical or clinical development of orphan drugs.

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- **Clinical trials**

Clinical trials that aim to improve treatments for the elderly, paediatric /adolescent diabetes medicines and orphan drugs will be supported under this priority.

Further Information

- NHS organisations interested in applying should visit the FP7 website to access the Health Work Programme for 2012 at:

http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/health-research-calls_en.html

- The Annex at the end of this briefing lists all topics and associated deadlines for the 2012 Work Programme
- NHS organisations may also be interested in accessing FP7 funding in other work programme areas, such as Information and Communication Technologies, Food, Agriculture, Fisheries and Biotechnology, Nanosciences, nanotechnologies and new Production technologies, and Socio-economics, Sciences and the Humanities For further information on these themes, please see the following website <http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp7/>

You may also refer to our website at: www.nhsconfed.org/europe

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How to apply

All NHS organisations are eligible to apply for EU funding. In order for there to be a 'European' element to each project, the European Commission requests that applications should be from a consortium of several different partners from different EU Member States. The minimum number of partners depends on the size of the project and the level of funding available for that specific topic; although in most instances a consortium should be comprised of at least 3 separate partners all from different Member States. Proposals should also state the duration of the project.

NHS bodies can submit applications as either the 'lead organisation' (i.e. as the partner leading and coordinating the project proposal, and subsequently the project, if approved), or as a partner. We would recommend organisations that do not have experience with EU research programmes seek participation as a partner (as opposed to a 'lead organisation') given the complexities of the programme.

NHS organisations wishing to join a project proposal or who are looking for a European partner should visit the following websites which have partner-search facilities:

- European Commission partner-search mechanism:
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/partners_en.html
- Fit for Life - SMEs partner search mechanism
<http://www.fitforhealth.eu/>

We also advise NHS organisations to look at previous projects in order to have an idea of the type of projects previously funded by the European Commission and the other organisations involved; such as universities and industry. Partnership working is a strong principle of the FP7 programme, and in the UK universities have a strong track record in successfully securing FP7 funding for health projects. We therefore recommend you consult the Medical Research Council (MRC) website listed below for further information and guidance in this area.

Details of NHS participation in FP7 health projects may be found by searching on the website below:

- <http://www.healthcompetence.eu/>

Please note that most FP7 projects are based on a principle of 'co-funding' and therefore the EU may expect participants to contribute towards some of the costs. For NHS organisations, up to 70% of total costs are normally awarded.

The deadlines for submitting proposals are detailed in the Annex attached to this briefing.

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Next steps and further information

The role of the NHS European Office is to inform and advise NHS organisations in England on EU affairs. If you are planning to submit a proposal under the FP7 Health Programme, please get in touch with us. You can also refer to our website for further information.

Further advice and guidance can also be obtained by contacting the FP7 Health UK National Contact Point:

Victoria Brewer - Medical Research Council (MRC)

Tel: + 44 (0)20 7395 2205

Email: victoria.brewer@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

Relevant websites

- NHS European Office:
www.nhsconfed.org/europe
- FP7 Health page:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/fp7_calls/
- Overview of FP7 Health topics and priorities: EUROPA Health site and on CORDIS Health site
http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/health-research-calls_en.html
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html
- FP7 ERA (European Research Area) NET:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/index_en.htm
- Partner search mechanism set up by the European Commission:
http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/partners_en.html
Fit for Health (which has partner search facilities for SMEs)
<http://www.fitforhealth.eu/>
- MRC website:
<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/Fundingopportunities/Internationalopportunities/FP7>

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ANNEX

There are two main calls for proposals under the 2012 Health Work Programme, **FP7-HEALTH-2012-INNOVATION-1** and **FP7 HEALTH-2012-INNOVATION-2**. There is a two-stage application process for submissions under each call. The deadlines for the first submission dates are given below.

Proposals for projects under FP7-HEALTH-2012-INNOVATION-2, are for pilot projects to be led by SMEs, although NHS organisations can still participate in these projects as partners.

There is also a third call under the ERA-NET scheme **FP7-ERA-NET-2012-RTD**, which has a single-stage application process. The deadline for submissions is also given below.

All calls are open to NHS organisations. The topics covered under each call are outlined below.

FP7-HEALTH-2012-INNOVATION-1

- 1. Biotechnology, generic tools and medical technologies for human health**
 - **Detection diagnosis and monitoring**
 - Development of technologies with a view to patient group stratification for personalised medicine applications
 - Innovative approaches to solid organ transplantation
 - Innovative strategies for translation of stem cell based therapies in regenerative medicine (European Union-Australia cooperation)
 - Targeted nucleic acid delivery as an innovative therapeutic or prophylactic approach
- 2. Translational research for human health**
 - **Large-scale data gathering and systems biology**
 - Support for international rare disease research
 - Clinical utility of –omics for better diagnosis of rare diseases
 - Databases, biobanks and ‘clinical bio-informatics’ hub for rare diseases
 - Validation of –omics-based biomarkers for diseases affecting the elderly
 - Statistical methods for collection and analysis of –omics data
 - Systems medicine: SME-driven research applying systems biology approaches to address medical and clinical needs
 - Systems medicine: Applying systems biology approaches for understanding multifactorial human diseases and their co-morbidities
 - Preparing for future research and innovation activities in systems medicine
 - **Research on human development and ageing:**

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- Integrative systems biology and comparative genomics for studying human aging and/or most common age-related diseases
- Investigator-driven clinical trials for optimisation of management of elderly patients with multiple diseases
- **Translational research in major infectious diseases to confront major threats to public health:**
 - ERA-Net on infectious diseases (ERA-NET-2012) (single-stage application only)
 - Co-infections of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and/or hepatitis
 - Co-morbidity between infections and non-communicable diseases
 - Prevention and treatment for HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis
 - Low-cost interventions for disease control in resource poor settings
- **Translational research in other major diseases:**
 - Innovative approach to managing diabetes.
 - Investigator-driven clinical trials for type 1 diabetes research
 - Rare diseases: Preclinical and /or clinical development of substances with a clear potential as orphan drugs.
 - Observational trials in rare diseases
 - Best practice and knowledge sharing in the clinical management of rare diseases
 - Other chronic diseases: Bio-markers and diagnostics for chronic inflammatory diseases of the joints and /or of the digestive system.
- 3. Optimising the delivery of healthcare to European citizens**
 - **Quality, efficiency and solidarity of healthcare systems including transitional health systems:**
 - Improving the organisation of health service delivery
 - New methodologies for health technology assessment
 - Social innovation for active and healthy ageing
 - **International public health and health systems:**
 - Research on health systems and services in low and middle-income countries
- 4. Other actions across the Health theme**
 - **Coordination and support actions**
 - Network to encourage knowledge transfer in FP-funded health research (especially in academic and governmental organisations.
 - Training actions linked to intellectual property rights management and knowledge transfer

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- Support for Presidency events: Organisation of supporting actions and events related to the Presidency of the European Union
- Communicating the benefits of European research to the general public
- Preparing the future for health research and innovation
- Setting health-related development goals beyond 2015.

FP7-HEALTH-2012-INNOVATION-2

1. Biotechnology, generic tools and medical technologies for human health

- **Detection diagnosis and monitoring**

- Medical technology for transplantation and bioartificial organs.

2. Translational research for human health

- **Translational research in major infectious diseases**

- Diagnostics for infectious diseases in humans

- **Translational research in other major diseases.**

- Other chronic diseases: Technological approaches to combating sensory impairments.

Deadline for submissions		
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FP7- HEALTH-2012 -INNOVATION-1 Two-stage applications	4 October 2011 - 4pm UK time	(First stage)
FP7- HEALTH-2012-INNOVATION-2 Two-stage applications	27 September 2012 - 4pm UK time	(First stage)
FP7-ERA-NET-2012-RTD Single-stage application	28 February 2012 - 4pm UK time	Single-stage