SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FUNDING FROM THE EU

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ABSTRACT
The *Seventh Framework Programme* for research and technological development (FP7) is the European Union's main instrument for funding research in Europe. FP7, which applies to the years 2007-2013, is the natural successor to the *Sixth Framework Programme* (FP6), and is the result of years of consultation with the scientific community, research and policy making institutions, and other interested parties.
Since their launch in 1984, the Framework Programmes have played a lead role in multidisciplinary research and cooperative activities in Europe and beyond. FP7 continues that task, and is both larger and more comprehensive than earlier Framework Programmes. Running from 2007 to 2013, the programme has a budget of 53.2 billion euros over the seven-year lifespan, the largest funding allocation yet for such programmes.

FP7 has some key differences to earlier EU research programmes, including:

Increased budget – the FP7 budget represents a 63% increase from FP6 at current prices, which means additional resources for European research.
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Focus on themes – a strong focus on major research themes (e.g. health, ICTs, space, etc.) within the largest component of FP7 – Cooperation – makes the programme more flexible and responsive to the needs of industry.

European Research Council (ERC) – the first pan-European agency for funding research, the newly created *European Research Council*, aims to fund more high-risk yet potentially high-gain European research at the scientific frontiers. The priorities in FP7 are contained within several specific programmes, as follows:

Cooperation programme – the core of FP7
The core of FP7 and its largest component by far, the *Cooperation programme* fosters collaborative research across Europe and other partner countries, according to several key thematic areas. These themes are: health; food, agriculture and fisheries, and biotechnology; information and communications technologies; nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies; energy; environment (including climate change); transport (including aeronautics); socio-economic sciences and the humanities; space and security. Special attention is also being paid to multi-disciplinary and cross-theme research, including joint calls for proposals between themes.

Ideas programme – and the European Research Council (ERC)
The *Ideas programme* is the first time an EU Framework research programme has funded pure, investigative research at the frontiers of science and technology, independently of thematic priorities. As well as bringing such research closer to the conceptual source, this flagship FP7 programme is a recognition of the value of basic research to society's economic and social welfare.

People programme – boosting European research careers
The *People programme* provides significant support for research mobility and career development, both for researchers inside the European Union and externally. It is being implemented via a coherent set of Marie Curie actions, designed to help researchers build their skills and competences throughout their careers. The programme includes activities such as initial researcher training, support for lifelong training and development via trans-national European fellowships and other actions, and industry/academia partnerships. An international dimension with partners outside the EU is to further develop the careers of EU researchers, by creating international outgoing and incoming fellowships to foster collaboration with research groups outside Europe.

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