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## 1<sup>st</sup> ERA-Chemistry Call for Proposals

### 1. Introduction

You have been nominated to act as a member of the international ERA-Chemistry review panel by a national European research council, explicitly not as a representative of this council, but as expert in the research field. The ERA-Chemistry research funding network thanks you very much for your interest in ERA-Chemistry matters, for your willingness to participate in the review procedure and for accepting the time-frame. We ask you for your understanding that we cannot remunerate you for your efforts during the review procedure, but of course you will be reimbursed for your travel and accommodation expenses.

In order to avoid conflicts of interest between reviewers and applicants the ultimate selection of this review panel can only be made after all proposals have been submitted. As a general rule, the names of the reviewers will remain anonymous to the applicants.

### 2. Who we are and what we are doing

The ERA-NET scheme is an innovative component of the European Union's (EU) Sixth Framework Programme supporting cooperation and coordination of national research activities and thus strengthening the European Research Area (ERA). The EU does not provide financial support for the research activities themselves, for which the ERA-NET members councils are expected to use their own national resources.

Supported under the ERA-NET scheme, the ERA-Chemistry network began its work in May 2004. ERA-Chemistry has set the ambitious goal to establish a transnational funding programme in chemistry, transcending national boundaries, as efficiently as possible and with minimal bureaucracy. ERA-Chemistry is coordinated by Dr. Karlheinz Schmidt (DFG), Bonn, Germany. The network has established a joint secretariat run by Cécile Bergouignan (CNRS), Paris and Dr. Markus Behnke (DFG), Bonn. The ERA-Chemistry consortium consists of the following partner research councils:

- Academy of Finland (AKA), Finland
- Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), France
- Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft e. V. (DFG), Germany
- Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT), Portugal
- Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS), Belgium
- Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung (FWF), Austria
- Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (FWO), Belgium
- Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET), Ireland

- Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (MEC), Spain
- Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO), The Netherlands
- Schweizerischer Nationalfonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung (SNF), Switzerland.

ERA-Chemistry has announced its 1<sup>st</sup> transnational call for proposals on 1 June 2005.

### 3. Scientific subject of the 1<sup>st</sup> call

***“Hierarchically organised chemical structures: from molecules to hybrid materials”***

This call aims at developing the mechanistic and theoretical understanding of non-covalently bound self-assemblies with different levels of space organisation, together with their potential use as precursors of new functional materials with controlled nano/meso size architectures. Within this frame, the proposals should exclusively focus on:

- Self-assemblies with predictable topologies and/or
- Architectures, dynamics and properties of bio-inspired reversible self-assemblies and/or
- Self-assembled functional materials with controlled hierarchical morphologies.
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The following explanations should be observed:

- *“non-covalently bound”*: only weak interactions should be considered; all covalent hierarchical architectures such as dendrimers etc. will not be considered
- *“self-assemblies”*: the conventional “coordination chemistry” aspects will be excluded
- *“hierarchical”*: implies different levels of space organisation.

### 4. Eligibility of applications, application procedure

All European researchers working in this field and eligible to apply for financial support from the participating national research councils are eligible to apply for funding.

Since the ERA-Chemistry budget will be very limited, it was decided that the call should aim at developing new European cooperation primarily between young researchers who have submitted their PhD thesis within the past ten years (excluding parental leave) and that the number of senior researchers per joint project should be restricted to *one*. The maximum number of applicants per joint project is three (maximum one per country). Moreover, only projects between new collaborators with no joint publications during the last five years can be funded. Applicants must not participate in more than one joint proposal.

Irrespective of these restrictions we expect a large number of applications. In order to reduce the effort for the applicants and also to enable a reasonable success rate of

at least 25% for the full proposals there will be a two-stage procedure for joint applications (pre-proposals and full proposals).

An informal pre-proposal must contain:

- a short description of the scientific content of the joint project (max. 2 pages)
- an appendix (if necessary) with diagrams, figures, and equations etc. (max. 1 page)
- a CV for each co-applicant with a list of 10 most relevant publications
- a declaration that all applicants have not published together during the last five years.

A full proposal will consist of the ERA-Chemistry application form with annexes (to be downloaded from the ERA-Chemistry website). Each applicant may request funding for one scientific co-worker (postgraduate researcher or postdoc [temporary position for up to 3 years, to be financed according to national gross wages]), small equipment ( $\geq 30,000$  €), consumables and travel costs. Please note that the rules of some national councils may allow to apply for an applicant's own position instead of a co-worker position.

The needs for each temporary position and/or scientific equipment should be comprehensively substantiated. Overheads and VAT will be handled according to the national rules. The positively ranked projects will be funded for three years, starting not later than January 2006.

Prior to the review procedure there will be a general eligibility check of applicants and applications of all transnational proposals (in charge: joint ERA-Chemistry secretariat and national research councils involved).

## 5. Review procedure, review criteria

According to the two-stage procedure for joint proposals (pre-proposals and full proposals) there will also be a two-stage review procedure.

### Pre-proposals

All pre-proposals that meet the general formal requirements mentioned above will be sent to all review panel members in electronic form on **10 August 2005**. The members of this panel will be asked to make a short check whether the research concepts describe novel, innovative ideas within the scientific scope of the call and complementarities of national expertise. They should inform the joint secretariat electronically not later than **2 September 2005** whether the applicants should be invited to submit a full proposal (with or without changes of working plan or partnership) or not. We are planning to host a first review panel meeting on **6 September 2005** in Bonn, Germany<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> This meeting might be cancelled, if the number of pre-proposals will be moderate and if the reviewers' recommendations will mainly be congruent.

## **Full proposals**

Only applicants explicitly invited by the ERA-Chemistry joint secretariat to submit a full proposal will be authorised to do so. After a second formal eligibility check all panel members will receive *summaries* of all eligible full proposals electronically. Each full proposal will be sent electronically to two or three review panel members (depending on the number of applicants per project). These reviewers will act as rapporteurs during the second panel meeting which will take place on **15 November 2005** in Paris. The reviewers will be kindly requested to evaluate the proposals according to the following criteria:

- Novel, innovative research project within the scientific scope of the call
- Transnational added value, complementarity of expertise
- Scientific track record of applicants; degree of scientific independence of young applicants
- Feasibility of project
- Adequateness of financial requirements

and to fill in the attached “Review Report Form” prior to the panel meeting. We kindly ask you to accept the confidentiality agreement and the conflict of interest declaration included in the report form before undertaking your assessment.

Besides an excellent project idea, the applicants should have demonstrated their ability to implement scientific projects by an adequate scientific track record. ERA-Chemistry would also like to encourage applicants’ activities off the beaten path. Therefore, projects that are highly interesting from a scientific point of view should be considered to be among the ones to be funded. Even though these projects may involve a higher risk in terms of a successful fulfilment.

Please keep in mind that excellent projects deserve excellent funding, but you are kindly requested to check the appropriateness of all requested positions of the project budget.

The review panel as a whole will make a final ranking of all positively evaluated proposals and will make clear funding recommendations.