



SYNOPSIS

Alternatives to European Framework Programmes are needed to increase funding for collaborative research in Europe. The European Commission supports European Research Area Networks, ERANETs, as one possible route. The **ERANET project SNOWMAN, Sustainable management of soil and groundwater under the pressure of soil pollution and soil contamination**, is preparing a call in 2006.

SNOWMAN's **Think Tank Workshop** was a two day "Large Group Planning Meeting" in Vienna from January 24th to 25th, 2005. Fifty research funders from 13 European countries looked for a common ground to **prepare a transnational co-ordinated call** for research in the field of **soil-water-sediment system** with respect to contamination. The participants developed the frame for SNOWMAN's **research agenda** and the respective **research management tools**.

First day's activities were dedicated to **research agenda**. The European Research Agenda was finalised by the Technical Working Group Research within the "European Soil Thematic Strategy" under the leadership of Winfried Blum, BOKU. The attendees focussed on the excerpted area contamination.

1. *Which issues are in accordance with national programmes?*

The answers countersign the **distinct European dimension** of the European Research Agenda elaborated. Almost all participating countries are active and interested in and find accordance with the issues.

2. *Which issues should be topics of the first co-ordinated SNOWMAN call?*

Several research issues show quite a high potential to become topics of the first SNOWMAN call and could find general agreement. Nevertheless, there is no research issue which could fit to all national priorities.

Research in **soil water system** is favoured by BE, NL, UK, while AT, BE, CY, ES, FR, NL, PL, RO, TR might focus on **natural attenuation** research. Finally, some of the research issues in the field of **risk based land management** show a high acceptance by AT, BE, CY, DE, ES, FI, FR, NL, PL, RO, SE, TR.

Second day's agenda was dedicated to **research management**. The answers resulted in a collection of shared ideas and opinions, with which the SNOWMAN core group can go ahead with a co-ordinated Call.

1. *The SNOWMAN Call: Which procedures might fit for a one stage application?*

On the contrary, most delegates feel that a **two stage process** would be **most appropriate** for SNOWMAN. This stepwise approach favoured includes the submission of the project outline and the full proposal.

The **advertising strategy** might use existing infrastructures of national and European topic related programmes, networks and media. A clear working programme for the call and a guide for proposers will have to be prepared (eligibility, award and selection criteria, principles of funding and expectations regarding own financial contribution). There is a clear **preference for paper based proposal submission**. A dissemination concept is required for every proposal.

2. *Proposal Evaluation: Which criteria for the evaluation of proposals are to be named?*

Before the call is made funding bodies must have agreed on the evaluation process including who, where and when the proposals have to be judged as to how well they fit the overall call. The criteria should be set out in the call advertisements and repeated in the call package.

Eligibility criteria will split naturally into two groups: formal requirements and fit to call. Whereas transnationality is a strict must, participants think that there are too many concerns from the funding bodies to fund applicants outside SNOWMAN's partner countries.

Regarding the **selection criteria**, the group identified a list of criteria for the programme, but noted, that it might be appropriate to apply different selection criteria depending on the focus of the call and the type of research (fundamental, strategic and applied research).

Applications will be **reviewed in two ways**: Science peer review to judge the quality of the planned research and SNOWMAN review to judge the relevance and programme packaging. There was consensus that **review panels should meet**. The national funders would review the portfolio of projects they were asked to fund but would not perform further peer reviews.

3. *Research Funding: What are criteria for different funding models?*

The funding model with a common pot is the most difficult to agree upon in the participating countries. Funding national contributions is probably the most realistic model. Also the mixed funding, combined with the funding of national contributions of research projects is a possible model. A way to proceed is to start with a simple and realistic model, but taking funding based on a common pot as a final long-term ambition.

Common pot: each participating country contributes to a common pot. Projects are financed out of the common pot. Financial control over the projects and the programme are carried out by one of the participating countries or by an independent third party. All participating countries have to agree on the procedures of the financial control and need to trust in the controlling organisation. The balance between the contribution and expenditures per participating country out of the common pot can be taken into account. The responsibility of the financial control of the coordinated call is a shared common responsibility.

Adaptation of projects: each participating country adopts (a) selected project(s) that fit their national programme best. The country that adopts the project is responsible for the financial control over this (these) project(s). One of the participating countries has to be responsible for the management and financial control of the general activities of the co-ordinated call.

National contributions: each country funds their own national contributions to the projects of the co-ordinated call. Special arrangements have to be made between the country which is responsible for the management of the project (leading partner) and the countries that are responsible for the financial control.

Mixed funding: A differentiation can be made between the funding of the general activities of the coordinated call and the research projects themselves. General activities such as preparation of the call, selection, dissemination, can be funded from a common pot. The projects can be funded by one of the models mentioned above.

4. *Co-operation: How to manage projects funded by the coordinated call?*

One main recommendation is to have a **simple system** managed by the **SNOWMAN Steering Committee**. Research funders involved in the SNOWMAN call could be integrated in a **Programme coordination team**. The number of programme coordinators will depend on the call structure and on the number of sub/topics. During the execution of SNOWMAN projects various “**meeting points**” shall be arranged in order to exchange knowledge. The **peer review group** may be in charge of the work progress evaluation, and end-users of research should be involved in this evaluation.

5. *Dissemination: How would you like research results to be disseminated?*

Dissemination has been defined as a **flow of knowledge** during the whole period of a project which **needs** a specific **management**, active **translation** for different audiences, and **money**. Before the publication of the call SNOWMAN should clarify several pre-conditions regarding the target audience, the types of research, the moment of dissemination, and the translators.

The participants developed a matrix for the different dissemination tools and types of research.

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In Europe about 75 ERANETs are running by the end of the third cut-off date, and research funding bodies are involved up to 780 times in ERANETs. SNOWMAN identifies the Think Tank Workshop as a contribution to the success of other ERANETs and future transnational calls within the European Research Area.

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SNOWMAN Partners

Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wasserwirtschaft (BMLFUW), Austria,
Agence De l'Environnement et de la Maîtrise de l'Energie (ADEME), France,
Umweltbundesamt (UBA), Germany,
Stichting Kennisontwikkeling en Kennisoverdracht Bodem (SKB), The Netherlands,
The Environment Agency of England and Wales (EA), United Kingdom.

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