

Cross-national and Multi-level Analysis of Human Values, Institutions and Behaviour (HumVIB)

Call for Outline Proposals

Funding initiative in the field of Cross-national and Multi-level Analysis of Human Values, Institutions and Behaviour (HumVIB)

Following agreement with 18 funding organisations in 17 countries, the European Science Foundation is launching a Call for Outline Proposals for Collaborative Research Projects (CRPs) to be undertaken within the EUROCORES Programme HumVIB. HumVIB will run for 3-4 years. It includes national research funding, as well as support for networking and dissemination activities provided by the ESF¹. The Programme aims to support high quality multidisciplinary research.

Outline Proposals are to be submitted by **14 May 2007 (12:00 noon CET)**. It is expected that Full Proposals will be invited by **18 June 2007**; with **14 September 2007 (12:00 noon CET)** as expected deadline for submission.

A Programme-specific website can be consulted for the latest updates at www.esf.org/humvib.

Background and objectives

The overarching objective of the HumVIB EUROCORES programme is the realization of the concept of Europe as a natural laboratory for the social sciences in which the diversity of institutions, practices, histories, and resources enables researchers to analyze how human values, attitudes and behaviour are affected by the characteristics of the multi-level systems or contexts in which they occur. The concept of Europe as a natural laboratory for the social sciences has its roots in the 1950s and 1960s in the efforts by Stein Rokkan and others to lay the groundwork for a genuinely comparative European social science. Those efforts were hampered by the division of Europe, by the lack of individual-level and aggregate-level data and by problems of statistical method, particularly in the area of cross-level inference. These obstacles have been either swept aside by history or largely overcome by progress in data collection and data management and in statistical methods. Major scientific breakthroughs in this field are now held back only by the absence of a coordinated programme that would enable a critical mass of researchers in the relevant areas and disciplines to come together for sufficient lengths of time and over a sufficient period to tackle the research problems head-on. The HumVIB EUROCORES programme is designed to overcome this final hurdle by combining:

- the unprecedented individual-level data resources now available in Europe and typified by the European Social Survey (ESS);
- comprehensive system-level and contextual data ;
- appropriate new methods of multi-level analysis;
- the testing of carefully elaborated theories of the effects of institutions and structures or, more generally, contextual factors on individual attitudes and behaviour.

What is EUROCORES?

The ESF European Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) Programmes offer a flexible framework for researchers from Europe to work on questions which are best addressed in larger scale collaborative research programmes. The EUROCORES

Programmes allow excellent researchers from different participating countries to collaborate in research projects 'at the bench'. They also allow, when appropriate, colleagues from non-European countries, for example the US, to participate. The Programmes encourage and foresee networking and collaboration of researchers to achieve synthesis of scientific results across the programme, to link to related programmes, and to disseminate results.

EUROCORES Programmes allow national research funding organisations in Europe and beyond to support top class research in and across all scientific areas, by matching the needs articulated by the scientific community with their strategic priorities.

Funding decisions on the projects and the research funding remain with the national research funding organisations, based on international peer review operated by ESF. ESF also provides support for networking the researchers and for the scientific synthesis of research results and their dissemination⁽¹⁾. This way, the EUROCORES Scheme complements the EC Framework Programme and other collaborative funding schemes at European level.

For further information see:
<http://www.esf.org/eurocores>

⁽¹⁾ Currently supported through a contract with the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme (EC Contract no. ERAS-CT-2003-980409).

The research design underlying this EUROCORES programme requires pan-European scale if it is to succeed. The point of the design is to capitalize on the possibility of empirically examining systemic influences on individual behaviour. This is the meaning of the reference to "Europe as a research laboratory". The research design requires the broad European scale and breadth of European involvement that the ESF framework can provide.

The fit between the EUROCORES idea and the research design is based on the fact that multi-level modelling places a high priority on the correct specification of the models within each of the system-level or contextual units involved. Meeting this requirement means bringing together in the project (a) expertise in within-country analysis of attitudes and behaviour, (b) experts in relevant institutional, social-structural and policy contexts and (c) data analysts and methodologists specialising in the comparative statistical and multi-level study of individual behaviour.

The European scale of the project will ensure European added-value by:

- systematically exploiting the research opportunities presented by the notion of Europe-as-laboratory;
- overcoming the fragmentation that currently plagues the social sciences in Europe;
- contributing to capacity-building in social-scientific research throughout Europe by disseminating new research designs, new methodologies and new research applications of these methodologies;
- contributing to the formal and practical training of post-doctoral researchers.

In the absence of a concerted programme of the kind envisaged, the ESS and other major datasets and all the excellent archiving work that goes with them will not yield their full benefit.

A final overall objective of the programme is to foster greater engagement between European social science and the social sciences in non-European countries and especially the social sciences in North America. The goal of programmatic trans-Atlantic cooperation in the social sciences has proved elusive with detrimental effects on the social sciences on both sides. The present programme offers hope for improvement in this regard on two grounds. Firstly, it offers the possibility of extending the notion of Europe as research laboratory to include comparable advanced industrial democracies (using the WVS, the ISSP and now also the ESS). Secondly the programme will further develop the trans-Atlantic collaborations and exchanges that have been growing in this area, particularly in regard to developments in research design and methodology.

It is anticipated that this EUROCORES programme will put this initial cooperation on a higher plane, to the mutual benefit of both European and wider international social science.

Scientific goals

Against the background just outlined, the specific scientific goal of this EUROCORES programme is to undertake comprehensive and theoretically oriented analyses of a broad spectrum of human behaviour and fundamental human values taking account of how values and behaviour and the connections between them are mediated and moulded by social, political and economic institutions, structures, conditions and practices. Up to now, research of this sort, while acknowledging in principle the importance of the institutional and structural context, has, for the most part, approached the problem by way of descriptive comparison, by dropping dummy variables into large scale regressions, or by focusing on aggregate analyses. It is true that multi-level modelling has also been undertaken but this has been limited in scope, in part due to the underlying demanding assumptions and computational complexity that go with hierarchical linear models. The EUROCORES programme proposed here transcends these limitations by means of four closely linked innovations:

- a) rigorous development of theories and hypotheses regarding system-level or contextual effects.
- b) collection and coordination of comparative data on the system-level/contextual variables (institutions, structures, policies, practices etc.) specified as a result of the theoretical efforts indicated in point (a)
- c) the development and testing of within-system models incorporating relevant country expertise in all stages of the analysis
- d) application of the most recent developments in multi-level modelling using the results of the comparative-institutional and country-specific phases of the research strategy (points (b) and (c)).

It must be emphasized that a research strategy incorporating these four elements is only viable because it can build on a fundamental development in European social science in the last five years, namely the establishment of the European Social Survey (ESS) and of the explicit standards for research design and data collection by other cross-national surveys that the ESS has set. The contribution of the ESS is based on rigour in sampling and in measurement and on the extensive range of research problems that, given its modular format, it covers.

Also important in this context is its provision of large representative within-country samples in a sufficient number of countries and regions to make multi-level statistical analysis of the kind envisaged here really powerful. Other comparative surveys relevant to the programme include ISSP, EVS/WVS, CSES, ECHP, EU-SILC, SHARE and the Eurobarometer.

Research topics

The very broad substantive and disciplinary range of the research projects made possible by the development of the HumVIB EUROCORES programme can be seen by considering the dependent variables covered by the term “human behaviour”. As used here, the term includes a wide range of mass attitudes and behaviour relating to, inter alia, environmental issues, economic problems, health and health-related issues, experiences of crime and security, welfare, governance, confidence in institutions, voting, social and civic participation, national/ethnic conflict, European integration, media use, migration, aging, gender, social stratification and equality/inequality, family and work-life balance, religious practice and belief and educational experience and achievement. Each of these attitudinal/behavioural manifestations relates back to some combination of the fundamental values of identity, security (personal and collective), wealth, well-being, equality, liberty, justice, participation, and community and social inclusion and cohesion. However, the connections (or lack of connections) between these fundamental values and the experiences, attitudes and behaviour of individuals are mediated by institutions and structures that range from formal constitutional provisions to informal practices governing particular issues and areas. These institutions and structures include national/regional economic systems, legal systems, legislative, executive and judicial systems, penal codes and practices, embedded cultural traditions and cleavages, social capital, media systems, electoral systems, party systems, health and welfare systems, educational systems, patterns of internet availability, etc.

It is clear that a research strategy designed to tackle the range of problems indicated must be comparative and multi-level. Cross-country comparisons and analyses linking individual behaviour to the characteristics of states will form a significant part of the implementation of the strategy. However, it is clear that the multi-level analysis cannot be confined to interaction between individual-level variables and national-level variables. Instead, each research project will define the levels of observation and analysis that are appropriate to its research problem. In some instances, this will be state and state institutions

and structures, in others it will be regions or other sub-national arenas of governance and, in other cases, it will be novel levels whose definition is determined in the light of the particular research problem. Given this variability, it may be useful to think of the notion of “levels” as it occurs in the phrase “multi-level analysis” in terms of macro-, meso-, and micro-contexts, each of which will be defined by the research problem and by the theoretical perspectives that drive the specific collaborative research project.

It is anticipated that this EUROCORES programme will lead to the development of a large number of research projects in areas defined by the intersections between the values, institutions and behaviours indicated above. In particular, given the nature of the research problems and of the methods required to solve these problems, each research project within the programme will involve a combination of country expertise, specialists in the comparative analysis of institutions, social and political structures and policies, and, finally, comparative behaviouralists and methodologists. The number of individuals making up a collaborative research project will vary depending on the nature of the research problem.

Also depending on the focus of each collaborative research project, a varying mix of disciplines and sub-disciplines can be envisaged, including behavioural and comparative political science, criminology, environmental science, geography, history, jurisprudence and comparative constitutional law, macro- and microeconomics, moral and political philosophy, philosophy of science, social psychology, sociology, and statistics. Finally in regard to the range of research topics, it is envisaged that a significant number of them will directly address pressing problems of policy-design, including institutional design, while others will carry policy implications of a more general sort.

Substantive Research Projects: Common Requirements

As just emphasised, this EUROCORES programme is open to projects addressing a wide range of research topics. While it is anticipated that there will be considerable variety in the substantive topics addressed and in the disciplinary perspectives adopted by the successful applications under this call, successful applications must also meet the following shared requirements:

- strong and manifest commitment to exploiting the notion of Europe as a research laboratory for the social sciences;
- a theoretically elaborated research problem;
- inclusion of the scientific disciplines demanded by the nature of the research problem;

- specification of relevant system-level/contextual variables and provision of sufficient evidence that any necessary data-collection related to these variables is possible within the resources envisaged by the individual project;
- incorporation of appropriate country-level and comparative institutional/policy expertise;
- commitment to multi-level statistical analysis together with the skills needed to carry this out.

Each of these common features merits brief elaboration:

Commitment to Europe as a research laboratory: Successful proposals will provide a compelling account of how national and/or sub-national variation in Europe opens up the possibility of identifying the effects of the relevant contextual variables on individual attitudes and behaviour.

A theoretically elaborated research problem: This call does not specify which theories should guide the research, just as it does not limit the scope of the research in terms of topics or disciplines. However, proposals will be required to situate their core research problem in an appropriate theoretical framework.

Inclusion of required scientific disciplines: It is anticipated that proposals will emerge from a wide variety of disciplines and it is likely that many of the projects will themselves be interdisciplinary. However, in responding to this criterion, it will not be sufficient for proposals to merely invoke the norm of inter-disciplinarity or to rattle off a list of disciplines. Successful proposals will provide a specific justification of the mix of disciplines involved or will justify a mono-disciplinary approach if that is what the research problem requires.

Specification of system-level variables and related data-collection needs: Successful proposals will clearly identify the systemic or contextual variables that theory suggests have an impact on individual attitudes and behaviour and their inter-relationships. Proposals will also identify the sources in which the system-level/contextual variables in question are to be found, specify any related data collection that may be required and provide evidence that the data collection envisaged is possible within the resources indicated.

Incorporation of appropriate country-level and comparative expertise: Successful multi-level statistical analysis demands that close attention be paid to individual-level variation within each "system". Proposals should indicate how the country and/or regional expertise necessary to take account of this factor will be built into the project. Solutions to the problem could, for example, range from networking between project

investigators, to fieldwork visits, to the direct involvement of country experts in the proposed project. Proposals should also describe how any necessary comparative institutional/policy expertise will be incorporated.

Commitment to multi-level statistical analysis: This commitment flows from the nature of the research programme and, indeed, stems ultimately from the notion of Europe as a research laboratory for the social sciences. It is anticipated that the analytical strategies proposed in the successful applications will tackle the multi-level research agenda head-on and that the proposers will have the relevant skills and experience to carry this out. Proposers should note that the programme provides for one or more methodological projects that will run in parallel with the substantive projects and will be expected to provide high-level methodological advice and arrange and supervise methodological training for postdoctoral researchers (see next section of this call for proposals)

Methodological and Data-Management/Archival Support for Substantive Research Projects

The substantive projects envisaged will require both intensive methodological support and extensive support in the management and archiving of the multi-level data sets that are at the core of the project. Accordingly, this call for outline proposals specifically includes both a call for collaborative project proposals in the methodology of multi-level analysis and a call for collaborative project proposals in the provision of data management and data archiving.

Collaborative project in the methodology of multi-level analysis:

This EUROCORES programme envisages two ways to bring together scholars focusing primarily on substantive issues with specialists in the kind of multi-level methodologies that are central to the research strategy. In the first place, the substantive research projects will be actively encouraged to include researchers / methodologists in the field of multi-level analysis. Secondly, collaborative project proposals will be invited in the area of multi-level methodology with the aim of providing training and advice and with a view to the development, implementation and dissemination of new techniques that are necessary for advancing the substantive-oriented projects. The purpose of such a methodological project will be to:

- stimulate the scientific discussion about the most appropriate methods for multi-level comparative research
- further develop existing methods of multi-level analysis and cross-level inference both in terms

- of rigour and of applicability to substantive problems
- advise the substantive research projects on methodological issues that arise
 - design and implement a training programme in statistical methods of multi-level analysis for pre- and post-doctoral researchers

Collaborative project in Data Management and Archiving (DMA) for the HumVIB programme:

Proposals are also invited for a collaborative research project designed to support the system-level/contextual data-collection efforts of the substantive projects and to manage and archive the ensuing multi-level datasets so that maximum benefit is realised with minimum duplication. Specifically, the DMA collaborative research project will:

- advise and assist the selected substantive research projects in the specification and sourcing of all system-level data relevant to the collaborative research project, including new data collection at national or regional level;
- liaise with ESS and other fieldwork agencies in individual countries to retrieve any additional available individual-level data that are required to make the connection between the system-level and the individual-level;
- integrate the system-level and individual-level data into multi-level datasets;
- be responsible for disseminating and archiving the integrated datasets.

For obvious reasons the scope and size of the DMA project will depend on the nature of the selected substantive collaborative projects and on their data collection/management requirements.

Guidelines for applications

(Outline and Full Proposals)

Collaborative Research Project (CRP) proposals from individual scientists or research groups eligible for funding by the agencies participating in the Programme will be accepted for consideration in the EUROCORES Programme HumVIB.

Proposals must, as a minimum, involve three eligible Principle Investigators (PIs) from **three different countries**. At the same time, a maximum of 50 % of Individual Projects (IPs) in a Collaborative Research Project (CRP) from one country are accepted. Scientists or groups not applying for or not eligible to apply for funding from these agencies (including applicants from industry), can be associated with a proposal where their added scientific value can be demonstrated. Their participation as Associate Partners in a project must be fully self-supporting and will not be financially supported by the participating funding agencies.

Applications should normally be for three years although applications for shorter or longer time periods may be considered depending on the rules of the participating funding agencies. Taking into account the selection and approval processes, the successful projects are expected to begin their activities in **March 2008**.

Online submission of applications

Outline and Full Proposals will be submitted online. Applicants should follow the proposal structure as indicated in the Application Template for Outline Proposals available on the Programme website at: www.esf.org/humvib.

On this Programme website, links to information on national funding eligibility and requirements as well as to a EUROCORES Glossary and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available.

Prior to submitting Outline Proposals, all applicants have to contact their national funding agencies in order to verify eligibility and to ensure compliance with their relevant agencies' granting rules and regulations.

At the time of online submission of the Outline Proposals, the Project Leader is asked to confirm this on behalf of all the participants in the CRP.

Outline Proposals

Outline Proposals are invited by 14 May 2007.

Outline Proposals will be examined by the participating funding agencies for formal eligibility. Therefore, it is crucial that all applicants contact their national funding agency prior to submitting their proposals.

In compliance with the rules and regulations of the participating national funding agencies, the requested funds under the EUROCORES Programme HumVIB can include salaries for scientific and technical staff, equipment as well as travel costs and consumables within the project, specifying the amount requested from each Funding Agency. National policies may also require the proposal to contain additional specific information. Applicants should be aware that the participating funding agencies can make significant adjustments to the requested funds in order to bring these in line with their rules and regulations.

Applications will be assessed according to a set of criteria in a two-stage procedure, as to ensure a thorough selection of scientifically excellent proposals. At the outline stage, the Review Panel will select proposals with potential for scientific excellence, by applying the following criteria:

- Relevance to the Call for Proposals
- Novelty and originality
- European added value (scientific)
- Qualification of the applicants

An Outline Proposal submitted must comprise:

- A short description of the CRP (max. 1200 words, including objectives, milestones, methodologies (for example experiments and fieldwork);
 - o Short description of how (and why) the partners contributing to the CRP will work together;
- Short CVs of Project Leader (PL), all PIs and Associate Partners (max. one page each, including five most relevant publications);
- Estimated budget (consistent with the rules of relevant national funding agency) tabulated according to a provided template.

Associated Partners (APs) are also considered part of a CRP and will be assessed as such at both the Outline and Full Proposal stage.

It will be assumed that arrangements for the handling of IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) will

be in place within projects, following the applicable national legislation and national funding agency rules. Applicants are strongly urged to have such arrangements in place, covering all research groups (including any associated groups) before the start of the projects. It is expected that the results obtained by the projects supported under this EUROCORES Programme will be placed in the public domain.

It is also expected that all relevant clearance of other national or international committees (for example ethics) has been obtained before funding is granted. It is the responsibility of applicants to clarify any such matters (if applicable) with their national contact points.

Full Proposals

Full Proposals will be invited following the recommendations of the Review Panel expected around the 18 June 2007. The deadline for full proposals will be 14 September 2007.

Please note that only applicants who submitted an Outline Proposal can submit a Full Proposal.

For the Full Collaborative Research Project (CRP) proposals, the most important selection criterion is "Scientific quality". Other criteria include inter-disciplinarity (according to the scope of the call), qualification of applicants, level of integration and collaboration, feasibility, European added value and relation to other projects (risk of double-funding and track record for collaboration).

The Full Proposals will be assessed by at least three independent external expert referees who are selected by the ESF from a pool of scientists suggested by the participating funding agencies and the Review Panel. A list of all referee names used for the international peer review will be published once the selection process is complete.

After receiving all referee reports, they will be made available (anonymous) to the applicants for their information and for comment (optional). The Review Panel will rank all Full Proposals based on the assessment of the Full Proposal, the anonymous referee reports and the applicant's responses to these.

The Review Panel will create a ranked list consisting of the best Full Proposals and will subsequently make recommendations to the Management Committee for the funding of these proposals. The actual granting of the funds to the Individual projects on the ranked list will depend on the total amount of funds available in each country through the participating Funding Agencies. The use of funds in a project will be subject to the rules and regulations of each participating Funding Agency as well as to the national laws of those countries.

Full proposals must include a well-argued scientific case (both for the collaboration envisaged and for the individual contributions), a list of participants, a detailed tabulated budget and other supporting information. A single, common scientific case must be made throughout the proposal to demonstrate a commitment to scientific synergy and integration of multinational expertise. In addition, the amount requested from each national funding agency has to be clearly and separately specified. Detailed instructions on requirements and how to complete the application forms will be made available when Full Proposals are being invited.

The **Project Leader** will be the main CRP proposal contact point for ESF for the duration of the project. He/she will be responsible for representing the Collaborative Research Project, for its participation in programme activities, and for any reporting requirements placed on the project as a whole.

All **Principal Investigators** will be responsible for dealing with the requirements attached to the contributions of their own funding organisation.

Programme Structure and Management

Programme Structure

The overall responsibility for the governance of the programme lies with a Management Committee, whose membership is formed by one representative from each participating funding agency (usually a senior science manager) together with an ESF representative.

Proposal assessment and selection are the responsibility of an international, independent Review Panel. The members of this panel are leading scientists, appointed by ESF following suggestions from participating Funding Agencies. The membership of the Review Panel will be available on the Programme website for information. The Review Panel is also expected to monitor the overall scientific progress of the programme.

The Scientific Committee which is formed by the Project Leaders of all funded CRPs will be responsible for proposing networking activities for scientific synergy in the EUROCORES Programme. They will also advise and support the EUROCORES Programme Coordinator in the coordination of networking activities.

Programme Networking

Networking activities are designed to strengthen the science objectives of this EUROCORES Programme by promoting coherence in the activities of the science community involved. This will provide the European added-value which is the central objective of any EUROCORES Programme.

Networking and collaboration within EUROCORES Programmes takes place at two levels:

1. between the various Individual Projects within each Collaborative Research Project (CRP) and
2. between the funded CRPs within the programme as a whole.

The intra-CRP activities are supported through the research grants each participant receives from the participating funding agencies in the given CRP. The cross-CRP activities are funded

through contributions to the EUROCORES Programme.

The intra-CRP collaboration is motivated by the nature of the CRP's research objectives, i.e., by the scope and the complexity of the questions it deals with. In a CRP, the participating groups have the opportunity to gather the required critical mass to successfully address the objectives and challenges of their project.

The cross-CRP networking and collaboration is stirred by the aims and the nature of the particular EUROCORES Programme. The theme which was the basis of this EUROCORES Programme has been selected for its clear need of collaboration in the proposed field. The funded CRPs will collectively set up and further streamline this new collaboration. To this end, the CRPs will engage the programme participants and, when of clear benefit, colleagues from outside the programme in joint activities such as:

- Working Group meetings for the exchange of information and results across the CRPs;
- Joint scientific meetings or summer schools;
- Short term visits;
- Development and delivery of joint training schemes;
- Seminars, Workshops, symposia, invited sessions either stand-alone or as part of other larger events;
- Common web-facilities and publications.

Through active participation of scientists in the above mentioned activities, not only existing collaborations are enhanced but new and strategic partnership opportunities are also identified.

Furthermore, these activities may provide opportunities to explore aspects of the programme which are not covered by the funded research projects.

The integrative activities between the CRPs will help to strengthen the field by building coherence within this emerging research community and will serve as a platform for the research work which is done in the programme.

Project members are expected to participate annually in at least one cross-CRP activity.

When submitting your proposal, please note that the costs for networking within your CRP should be budgeted for in your proposal. Funds for networking between the CRPs will be centrally managed by the ESF through contributions from the participating member organisations.

Programme evaluation

A Mid-Term evaluation, conducted by the Review Panel, will evaluate the overall progress of the Programme, based on the progress of the funded CRPs. Here, the Review Panel has a steering function and can comment on the CRPs' work plan in relation to the objectives of the overall Programme. A final evaluation will assess the achievements of the whole EUROCORES Programme.

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**CNR's final decision for participation
is expected by the end of March 2007.
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UK researchers eligible for funding from ESRC, which is participating in "HumVIB" with associate status, and which offers funding for applications associated with the Call, can apply as «Associate Partners» if they bring added value to a CRP. They should visit the ESRC website for details, and the "HumVIB" site www.esf.org/humvib for updates.

Associate status also applies to researchers funded through other funding agencies, offering funding under schemes other than this Call for projects associated to the CRPs.

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