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AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE FRAMEWORK FOR PROGRAM IV (1994 - 1998)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The conduct of effective agricultural research is vital for the people of the European Union (EU), whether they are producers or consumers, and it has an important role to play in improving the efficiency of the Common Agricultural Policy. Of course, Member States conduct their own research projects, but when these are of common interest, the utilisation of personnel and facilities can be greatly enhanced if there is improved communication and collaboration.

Furthermore, national agricultural research tends to be subject to tight financial constraints, and is therefore often restricted to areas which are of national concern or immediate importance. The Commission, on the other hand, can take both a wider and a longer-term view, and perceive problems of common concern either now or in the foreseeable future. These matters of common concern may very well become problems of great national or local concern if not addressed; they may already cause national anxiety but action against them be beyond the ability of any one nation.

It was for these reasons that the Treaty of Rome explicitly mentioned the co-ordination of agricultural research, and initial attempts to set up a co-ordinated programme began in the early 1960s. The first programme, in the late 1960s, covered research into classic swine fever (hog cholera) and African swine fever - two major diseases which threatened Member States and had spread as close as the Iberian Peninsula.

Towards the end of 1971 the heads of the agricultural research services of Member States began to meet to advise the Commission on how to proceed with a co-ordinated programme, and in June 1974, under regulations approved by the Council of Ministers (Agriculture), they were given statutory recognition as the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR). After much discussion, subjects were chosen for a programme to run for three years (1976-1978) and funding was approved by the Council.

In the period 1990-1994, agricultural research was financed by the Community Research and Technological Development (RTD) budget under the specific programme concerning «Competitiveness of agriculture and management of agricultural resources (CAMAR)». A brochure to disseminate the results of the 80 completed projects, partly financed through 50 million ECUs worth of contracts with the Commission, was prepared in 1996.

In 1991 the specific RTD programme concerning «Agriculture and Agro-Industry, including Fisheries (AIR)» for 1990-1994 was launched, and during the period 1992-1994 more than 125 million ECUs were allocated for the part-finance of 189 research, technological development and demonstration projects on agriculture and rural development matters.

A new specific programme for the EU concerning «Agriculture and Fisheries, including agro-industry, food technologies, forestry, agriculture and rural development (FAIR)», 1994-1998, is now under way.

2. THE FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME IV (1994-1998)

Following the ratification of the Treaty of European Union, all Community activities in the field of research, technological development and demonstration are covered by the European Community Framework programme for RTD.

Framework Programme IV was adopted in April 1994. It is of five years' duration (1994-1998) and has a budget of 13.1 MECU.

Framework Programme IV contains 4 activities and a number of specific RTD programmes which cover the following areas:

Activity 1. RTD AND DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMMES	Funding in MECU
1. Information and communication technologies	3 626
<i>Telematics</i>	898
<i>Communication technologies</i>	671
<i>Information technologies</i>	2057
II. Industrial technologies	2 125
<i>Industrial and materials technologies</i>	1818
<i>Standardization, measurements and testing</i>	307
III. Environment	1 150
<i>Environment and climate</i>	907
<i>Marine science and technology</i>	243
IV. Life science and technologies	1 674
<i>Biotechnologies</i>	588
<i>Biomedicine and health</i>	358
<i>Agriculture and fisheries</i>	728
V. Energy	2403
<i>Non-nuclear energy</i>	1067
<i>Nuclear fission safety</i>	441

<i>Controlled thermonuclear fusion</i>	895
VI. Transport	256
<i>Transport</i>	256
VII. Targeted socio-economic research	147
<i>Targeted socio-economic research</i>	147
Activity 2. CO-OPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS	575
Activity 3. DISSEMINATION AND EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS	352
Activity 4. STIMULATION OF THE TRAINING MOBILITY OF RESEARCHERS	792
TOTAL	<u>13 100</u>

Most of the specific RTD programmes are carried out through:

- Shared cost action. (Community participation in the costs of RTD is not more than 50% of total project costs; where the training and mobility of researchers is concerned there is Community participation of up to 100%). Universities, institutions and other establishments which do not have analytical systems of budget accountancy are reimbursed on the basis of 100% of the allowable additional costs.
- Concerted actions. (The Community does not participate in the costs of the research itself, but only reimburses co-ordination costs, such as those incurred through meetings, travel, etc. up to 100%)
- Preparatory, accompanying and support measures. (The Community pays up to 100% of the projected costs).

3. THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMME OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND FISHERIES (FAIR)

This programme aims to promote and harmonise research in the major European primary food production and non-food sectors of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, fisheries and aqua-culture and its links with the input and processing industries, rural activities, the end-user and the consumer.

The programme helps primary production to adapt and respond to changing Community policies and it therefore places considerable emphasis on the development of new markets, products and processes for the raw materials from agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

The programme itself operates on the following three levels:

Level I. Objectives requiring *CONCENTRATED MEANS*

Area 1. Integrated Production and Processing Chains

Area 2. Scaling-up and Processing Methodologies

Area 3. Generic Science and Advanced Technologies for Nutritious Foods

Area 4. Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development

Area 5. Fisheries and Aqua-culture

Level II. Objectives addressed by *CONCENTRATED MEANS*

This is constituted by the sixth area of the programme, where co-ordination and consolidation at European level is sought by building upon national and industrial research programmes and activities in any of the fields covered by the specific programme, concerning both food and non-food products and processes for which Member States have extensive programmes.

Level III. Objectives addressed by *HORIZONTAL ACTIVITIES*

These involve specifications which have to do with research, market and legislative analysis, and administration. The actions envisaged are implemented in any of the areas covered by the specific programme, as follows:

Demonstration- type projects

Analysis of social and ethical issues

Training and mobility of scientists

Dissemination, exploitation and publication of results

Funding of workshops and conferences.

Where the areas of the first level are concerned they are subdivided as follows:

AREA 1. INTEGRATED PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING CHAINS

Sub-area 1.1 *The biomass and bioenergy chain*

Sub-area 1.2 *The «green» chemical and polymer chain*

Sub-area 1.3 *The forestry-wood chain*

AREA 2. SCALING-UP AND PROCESSING METHODOLOGIES

Sub-area 2.1 *Chemical and physical processes*

Sub-area 2.2 *Bioprocessing*

Sub-area 2.3 *Control system*

AREA 3. GENERIC SCIENCE AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES FOR NUTRITIOUS FOODS

Sub-area 3.1 *Consumer nutrition and well-being*

Sub-area 3.2 *New and optimised food materials and nutritious food products*

Sub-area 3.3 *Advanced and optimised technologies and processes*

Sub-area 3.4 *Generic food science*

AREA 4. AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Sub-area 4.1 *Reformed CAP: optimisation of methods, systems and primary production chains. Agriculture-environment interactions. Policy relevant economic analysis and impact assessment*

Sub-area 4.2 *Quality policy*

Sub-area 4.3 *Diversification*

Sub-area 4.4 *Animal and plant health, animal welfare*

Sub-area 4.5 *Multifunctional management of forests*

Sub-area 4.6 *Rural development*

Sub-area 4.7 *Complementary activities by JRC in support of DG V1*

AREA 5. FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Sub-area 5.1 *Impact of environmental factors on aquatic resources*

Sub-area 5.2 *Ecological impact of fisheries and aquaculture*

Sub-area 5.3 *Biology of species for optimisation of aquaculture*

Sub-area 5.4 *Socio-economic aspects of the fishing industry*

Sub-area 5.5 *Improved methodology*

3.1 Participation

Member States

The programme is open to all natural persons and organisations established in Member States of the EU (industrial firms, universities, institutes of higher education, research organisations etc.).

Non-member States

Participation in this programme without financial support from the Community is also permitted on a project-by-project basis for:

- * Legal entities established and carrying out RTD activities in a European third country
- * Legal entities established and carrying out RTD activities in a country which has an agreement on scientific and technological co-operation with the Community covering the activities of this programme
- * International organisations, on condition that the participation is in the interests of Community policy, and the minimum number of legal entities from the Community and any State associated with the programme is involved. However, in order to facilitate the participation of organisations from the CEEC and the NIS, limited

Community financial support may be made available, in areas and under conditions to be determined.

3.2 Criteria of Proposals

Eligibility criteria

- *Conformity with the scope and objectives of the programme*
- *Trans-national collaboration*

There must be at least two non-affiliated participants from different Member States. If an organisation from a non-Member State proposes to collaborate on a project-by-project basis, its proposal should clearly describe the benefits to the European Union that will accrue from its participation.

General criteria

- *Scientific and technical excellence and novelty*
- *Pre-competitive character*
- *Scientific, technical and economic benefits*
- *European dimension*
- *Quality of management*
- *Potential for exploitation of results*
- *Technical competence*

Specific criteria

- *Clear and immediate relevance to Community policies*
- *Market orientation*
- *Quality*
- *Multidisciplinary and integrated approach*
- *Technology assessment (socio-economic impact)*
- *Private sector participation*
- *Project size and duration*

For demonstration projects, in addition to the above general and specific criteria, the following criteria should also be met:

- *Novelty and risks*
- *Knowledge sufficient to allow demonstration*
- *A large economic potential*
- *Comparative advantages*

- *Participation of producers and users*

3.3. Evaluation and selection of proposals

The procedure for the evaluation and selection of proposals submitted to the European Commission in Brussels is as follows:

- Verification of eligibility of proposals by Commission staff
- Confidential evaluation of the proposals by independent experts
- Initial ranking of proposals by the Commission and the preparation of a draft short list of the proposals the Commission intends to fund
- Examination of the evaluation process, a discussion on the results and the provision of an opinion on the Commission's short list by the Advisory or Regulatory Committee responsible for the programme
- Final selection by the Commission of short-listed proposals and communication of the results of the evaluation and selection to the proposal co-ordinators.