



## Classification of the FP 6 Instruments

### Detailed description

### Instruments aimed at generating, demonstrating and validating new knowledge

#### Integrated Projects

##### *Purpose*

Integrated Projects aim at generating the knowledge required to implement priority themes and, as such, contribute to increasing Europe's competitiveness or to address major societal needs. They are ambitious projects addressing different research issues via a "programme approach" and usually include several components.

They may include long-term or "risky" research. In other words, their research activities may cover the whole research spectrum from **basic to applied research**.

Integrated Projects are expected to assemble the necessary critical mass of activities, expertise and resources to achieve ambitious objectives (objective-driven research). Since critical mass differs from field to field, and from topic to topic within a field, the critical-mass criterion is **whether the activities and resources needed to achieve these ambitious objectives have been brought together**.

##### *Target audience*

Any legal entity can participate in an Integrated Project. However, in practice, the main participants in Integrated Projects are organisations active in the research field: **enterprises** (whatever their size), **research institutes** and **universities**.

Organisations with skills in management, dissemination and knowledge transfer, as well as potential users and other stakeholders, may also participate.

The "optimum size" of the partnership for maximum efficiency is 10-20 participants. However, it must be pointed out that this figure will differ from one thematic priority to another. For example, it could be lower for thematic priority 7 (citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society) because of its specific characteristics.

##### *Activities covered by the EU contribution*

- **RTD activities**: all activities directly aimed at creating new knowledge form the core of the Integrated Project; this may include **innovation-related activities**, such as:
  - activities relating to the protection and dissemination of knowledge and, when relevant, studies on the wider societal impact of that knowledge,
  - activities to promote the exploitation of the results and

- “take-up” actions.

These actions are inter-related and should be conceived and implemented in a coherent way (intellectual property protection, dissemination activities, studies of socio-economic aspects, activities promoting the exploitation of results)

- **Demonstration activities:** activities to prove the viability of new technologies that offer a potential economic advantage but which cannot be commercialised directly (e.g. testing of prototypes)
- **Training activities:** advanced training for researchers and other key staff, research managers, industrial executives (in particular for SMEs), and potential users of the knowledge produced within the project. These activities should contribute to the professional development of the persons concerned. *NB: salary costs for these trainees are not eligible costs*
- **Consortium management activities:**
  - overall management and coordination issues:
    - technical management of industrial work packages,
    - management framework linking together all the project components and maintaining communications with the Commission.

Depending on the size of the project, a specially constituted management team with dedicated staff covering a range of skills may need to be set up. As such these activities include:

- obtaining audit certificates by each of the participants,
- implementing competitive calls by the consortium for the participation of new partners in accordance with the provisions of the contract,
- maintenance of the consortium agreement,
- obtaining any financial security such as bank guarantees when requested by the Commission ,
- any other management activities at consortium level not covered by any other activity, such as:
  - coordination of the technical activities of the project,
  - overall legal, contractual, ethical financial and administrative management,
  - coordination of knowledge management and other innovation-related activities,
  - overseeing the promotion of gender equality in the project,
  - overseeing science and society issues related to the research activities conducted in the project, and
  - any other management activities foreseen by the Annexes to the contract.

### **Funding mechanism**

Funding takes the form of a “**grant to the budget**”, forming a ceiling for the EU contribution. It consists of a reimbursement of the costs claimed by the participants on the basis of their cost models, **different rates** being applied according to the types of activity:

- research and technological development and innovation-related activities:
  - 50% for those participants applying the “full cost” or “full cost, flat rate” cost models
  - 100% of “additional costs” for those participants applying the “additional cost model”
- demonstration activities
  - 35% for those participants applying the “full cost” or “full cost, flat rate” cost models
  - 100% of “additional costs” for those participants applying the “additional cost model”
- training activities
  - 100% for those participants applying the “full cost” or “full cost flat rate” cost models
  - 100% of “additional costs” for those participants applying the “additional costs model”
- management of the consortium:
  - 100% of costs with a maximum of 7% of the EU contribution (management costs exceeding this ceiling will be covered up to the rate applying to the activities they relate to)
  - participants applying the “additional cost model” may charge direct recurring costs within the 7% limit

So far, the average EU contribution has varied **from €4 million to €25 million** per project, depending on the thematic priority, with an overall **average of about €10 million**.

### **Duration**

The average duration of an Integrated Project up to now has varied from **36 to 60 months** depending on the thematic priority. A duration exceeding 60 months could be accepted if this is necessary to achieve the objectives of the project.

### **Flexibility**

The participants must submit an overall implementation plan for the full duration of the project, and a detailed plan for the first 18 months, with its associated financial plan.

With the agreement of the Commission, the overall implementation plan may be modified and the detailed plan will be updated each year, as part of the reporting schedule.

### **Enlargement of the partnership within the initial budget**

With the agreement of the Commission, the consortium may decide to add new participants as the project evolves, though without additional financing from the EU.

The contract will specify under what circumstances the addition of a new participant will require the prior publication of a competitive call.

Participants in an Integrated Project may “reserve” a share of their initial budget to be dedicated to further partners expected to join the partnership at a later stage.

### **Specific characteristics**

Integrated Projects are based on a “**programme approach**” dealing with different issues. They are usually composed of various “modules” covering research, demonstration, training, and management of the consortium.

Although this is not an obligation, the ambitious nature of Integrated Projects will often require them to be multidisciplinary.

## **Instruments aimed at generating, demonstrating and validating new knowledge**

### **STREPs**

*(Previously known as “shared-cost” actions)*

#### **Purpose**

Specific Targeted Research Projects (STREPs) are projects dealing with objective-driven research. They are limited in scope, since they usually focus on a single issue and, as such, are often monodisciplinary.

They may consist of:

- a research and technological development activity;
- a demonstration activity, or
- a combination of both types of activity.

Usually, they include fewer activities than Integrated Projects. Since their objectives are less ambitious than those of Integrated Projects, the critical mass of activities and resources required for STREPs will **usually be smaller** than for Integrated Projects. However, what is to be assessed is whether or not the **necessary** means to reach the objectives defined have been assembled, without any limit other than the legal minimum requirement regarding the partnership.

#### **Target audience**

Any legal entity can participate in a Specific Targeted Research Project. However, in practice, the participants in STREPs are: primarily organisations active in the research field: **enterprises** (whatever their size), **research institutes** and **universities**. SMEs usually state a clear preference for this instrument.

The “optimum size” of the partnership, in order to ensure maximum efficiency, is between 6 and 15 participants. However, it must be pointed out that this figure will differ from one thematic priority to another. For example, it could be lower for thematic priority 7 (citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society) because of its specific characteristics.

#### **Activities covered by EU contribution**

- **RTD activities** provided that they are targeted, well-defined and have precisely focused research objectives and measurable outcomes (e.g. achievement of concrete results) and/or
- **Innovation-related activities:** should normally include activities relating to the protection/dissemination of knowledge, socio-economic studies, activities to promote the exploitation of the results and possibly, “take-up actions”. These activities are inter-related and should be implemented in a coherent way

- **Demonstration activities:** activities designed to prove the viability of new technologies that offer a potential economic advantage, but which cannot be commercialised directly (e.g. testing of prototypes)
- **Management of the consortium:** STREPs will include an overall management structure. Over and above the technical management of individual work packages, an appropriate management framework linking together all the project components and maintaining communications with the Commission will be needed.

### **Funding mechanism**

Funding takes the form of a “**grant to the budget**”, forming a ceiling for the EU contribution. It consists of a reimbursement of the costs claimed by the participants on the basis of their cost models, **different rates** being applied according to the types of activity:

- research and technological development and innovation-related activities:
  - 50% for those participants applying the “full cost” or “full cost, flat rate” cost models
  - 100% of “additional costs” for those participants applying the “additional-cost model”
- demonstration activities
  - 35% for those participants applying the “full cost” or “full cost, flat rate” cost models
  - 100% of “additional costs” for those participants applying the “additional cost model”
- management of the consortium:
  - 100% of costs with a maximum of 7% of the EU contribution (management costs exceeding this ceiling will be covered up to the rate applying to the activities they relate to)
  - participants applying the “additional costs model” may charge direct recurring costs within the 7% limit

So far, the average EU contribution has varied **from € 0.8 million to € 3 million** per project, depending on the thematic priority, with an overall **average of about € 1.9 million**.

### **Duration**

The average duration of STREPs up to now has varied from **18 to 36 months** depending on the thematic priority.

Occasionally, a longer period could be allowed if it is necessary to reach the objectives (and fully justified). Similarly, a shorter period could be agreed provided the objectives can be reached in the time proposed.

### **Flexibility**

At its outset, the project will have an agreed **detailed work plan for the whole duration** of the contract.

With the agreement of the Commission, the detailed work plan may be modified. However, the overall objectives and principal deliverables, as set out in the contract, will not be expected to change during the lifetime of the project.

### **Enlargement of the partnership within the initial budget**

When the consortium is faced with the need to replace a participant, (e.g. if one leaves the partnership), the new participant may be selected by the consortium, subject to the Commission's approval and without any increase of the maximum EU contribution to the project.

If participants want to enlarge their consortium by taking on board a new partner, and want an increase of the EU contribution, then they must submit a request to the Commission.

### **Specific characteristics**

STREPS are based on a "project approach" oriented towards the resolution of one specific issue or problem. They usually have one single component, being "research/innovation" or "demonstration". They do not include any training activity.

Although STREPs are usually monodisciplinary, they may be multidisciplinary in certain thematic areas due to the characteristics of the topics concerned.

### **Differences between STREPs and Integrated Projects**

Although they also pursue the objective of advancing knowledge, STREPs differ from Integrated Projects as regards the scope of their activities: they are focused on a "single problem" approach and are often monodisciplinary since they deal with less complex issues. Integrated Projects, on the other hand, focus on solving several problems and therefore are usually multi-disciplinary and have a multi-module approach.

## **Instruments aimed at integrating the participants' research capacities (while potentially supporting their joint research activities)**

### **Networks of Excellence**

#### **Purpose**

Networks of Excellence are designed to strengthen scientific and technological excellence on a particular research topic by **integrating** at a European level the critical mass of resources and expertise needed to provide European leadership and to be a world force in that topic.

Networks of Excellence are therefore an instrument aimed at **tackling fragmentation** of existing research capacities. They should be implemented **provided that**:

- research capacity is fragmented in the (thematic) area being considered;
- this fragmentation prevents Europe from being competitive at international level in that area;
- the proposed integration of research capacity is likely to lead to higher scientific excellence and more efficient use of resources.

Networks of Excellence are expected to assemble the critical mass of resources, activities, and expertise needed to ensure that they reach their ambitious objective, e.g. the durable integration of the participants' capacities in the area considered. This critical mass will differ from field to field, and possibly from topic to topic within a field.

However, it must be pointed out that **durable integration** can only be reached if a **limited number of partners** (institutions) dedicate as **many researchers** as possible to the network. In other words, it is better to have 5 institutions each dedicating 20 researchers to the network, rather than 20 institutions each dedicating 5 researchers to the network.

The requirement for durable integration, together with the type of activities that can be performed and financially supported are the main differences with respect to Coordination Actions, which are an instrument for co-operation on a specific objective for a specific period of time.

#### **Target audience**

Any legal entity can participate in a Network of Excellence. However, in practice, participants in Networks of Excellence will be primarily organisations active in the research field such as: **research centres, universities, research and technology organisations**, and to a lesser extent **enterprises** (whatever their size).

In practice, both large companies and SMEs are sometimes reluctant to participate directly in Networks of Excellence due to the requirement for "durable integration" and prefer a more indirect involvement, e.g. through the "governing/advisory board" or "steering committee" of a network.

Therefore, universities and public research centres have so far been the main participants in Networks of Excellence.

The “optimum size” of the partnership, in order to ensure maximum efficiency, is between 6 and 12 participants. However, it must be pointed out that this figure will differ from one thematic priority to another.

Nevertheless, participants should be aware that the “durable integration” objective will only be reachable if the Network involves a **limited number of partners** (organisations), each dedicating as many researchers as required to the activities of the network.

### **Activities covered by EU Contribution**

Each Network must submit a “**joint programme of activities**”, including the following three components:

- **Integrating activities:**
  - discussing and establishing mechanisms for co-ordinating and finally merging the research portfolios of the partners,
  - staff exchange schemes,
  - complete or partial relocation of staff,
  - establishment of shared and mutually accessible research equipment, managerial and research infrastructures, facilities and services,
  - exploration of the legal circumstances and possibilities for durable integration,
  - setting up of joint supervisory bodies,
  - measures for joint public relations ...
- **Joint research programme:**
  - jointly executed research, which aims at achieving the purpose of durable integration, e.g. by developing common tools, or at filling gaps in the collective knowledge portfolio of the network. *(NB: in addition to this research, participants in a network will pursue their “own institutional portfolio”, including research in the area covered by the network itself. These research activities are not part of the “joint programme of activities”)*
- **Activities linked to spreading of excellence:**
  - The main component of these activities will be a joint training programme for researchers and other key staff;
  - Other spreading of excellence activities may include: dissemination and communication activities (including public awareness and understanding of science), and, more generally, networking activities to help transfer knowledge to teams external to the network.
  - Spreading of excellence may also include the promotion of the results generated by the network; in such a context, networks should, when appropriate, include innovation-related activities (protection of knowledge generated within the network, assessment of the socio-economic impact of the

knowledge and technologies used and development of a plan for dissemination and use of knowledge)

### And

**Management of the consortium:** a coherent management framework will be necessary given the broad range of activities that will take place within a network. Such a management framework may include:

- obtaining audit certificates by each of the participants,
- implementation of competitive calls by the consortium for the participation of new partners, in accordance with the provisions of the contract,
- maintenance of the consortium agreement,
- obtaining any financial security such as bank guarantees if requested by the Commission,
- any other management activities at consortium level not covered by any other activity, such as:
  - coordination of the technical activities of the project,
  - the overall legal, contractual, ethical, financial and administrative management,
  - coordination of the knowledge management and other innovation-related activities if appropriate,
  - overseeing the promotion of gender equality in the project,
  - overseeing science and society issues related to the research activities conducted within the project,
  - any other management activities required by the Annexes to the contract.

### Funding mechanism

Funding takes the form of a “**grant for integration**”, which is a fixed amount to support the joint programme of activities.

#### Calculation of the grant

The grant is calculated on the basis of the **number of researchers** proposed for integration by the participants<sup>1</sup>.

Once this figure has been determined, the “**conversion table**” included in the Annex III of the model contract for Networks of Excellence is applied. This table sets out an annual fixed amount (on a decreasing scale) per “integrated researcher”. In order to establish the **total maximum amount** of the grant as set out in the contract, the total obtained by applying the annual amount per head will be multiplied by the number of years for which the support is requested. The annual amount of the grant is included in the technical Annex of the contract.

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<sup>1</sup> « researcher » in this context means : any person having a PhD or at least 4 years experience in research, being an employee of one of the participants or working under one participant’s management authority in the frame of a formal agreement between this participant and his “normal” employer. The “researchers “ to be taken into account for the calculation of the grant for integration are those persons corresponding to the above conditions and identifiable by name at the time of the deadline of the relevant call for proposals and constitute the research capacities of the contractors within the frame of the proposed Network of Excellence on the topic.

Participants may, however, request a **lower amount** than that resulting from the calculation using the “conversion table”, e.g. to take into account the characteristics of the topic under consideration. In all cases, participants should ensure that the eligible costs for implementing the joint programme of activities (on the basis of the cost model they apply) are higher than the grant requested, otherwise they will not be able to obtain the payment of this amount in full (see below under “payment of the grant”).

#### Payment of the grant

The grant established as set out above will be **paid provided that**:

- Satisfactory **progress towards durable integration** has been achieved. If the network has not made any progress towards durable integration then normally the annual grant will not be paid, whatever the actual costs incurred in order to implement the joint programme of activities. The assessment of progress will be made at the end of each year by the Commission, usually assisted by external experts.

#### **and**

- The actual **eligible costs** incurred by the participants (based on the cost models that apply to them) in implementing the joint programme of activities **exceed the annual amount of the grant**. If these costs are lower than the amount of the grant, the annual grant will not be paid in full, no matter what degree of integration is achieved.

So far, the average EU contribution has varied **from € 5 million to € 15 million** per project, depending on the thematic priority, with an overall **average of about € 7 million**.

#### Duration of the support

The average duration of a Network of Excellence up to now has varied from **48 to 60 months** depending on the thematic priority. A duration exceeding 60 months (in duly justified cases up to 84 months) could be accepted if this is necessary to achieve durable integration.

Given the requirement for durable integration to be achieved at the end of the period of EU support, it is recommended to provide for a project duration of at least 48 months (and preferably 60) for NoEs.

#### Flexibility

At the start of the contract, the consortium will agree with the Commission an **overall joint programme of activities** for the full duration of the contract, a **detailed** joint programme of activities for the first **18 months**, and an initial list of participants.

The detailed joint programme of activities will be updated annually and, if necessary, the overall joint programme may also be updated.

#### Enlargement of partnership within the initial budget

The consortium may, with the agreement of the Commission, decide to take on new participants as the project evolves, but without additional EU financing.

The contract specifies when the addition of a new participant requires the prior publication of a competitive call.

**Specific characteristics**

Due to the very demanding nature of the requirement for durable integration, Networks of Excellence require, from the very start, an **active involvement at a strategic level** of the participating institutions. These institutions have to be actively represented in the “governing board” that is expected to oversee the progress towards durable integration.

Most importantly, it must be noted that a limited number of institutions should be involved in each NoE, since it is extremely doubtful that durable integration can be achieved with the participation of a broad range of institutions.

## **Instruments aiming at supporting collaboration, coordination and other activities**

### **Coordination Actions**

*(formerly concerted actions/thematic networks)*

#### **Purpose**

Coordination Actions aim at promoting and supporting the co-ordination, co-operation or networking of a range of research and innovation projects or operators for a specific objective – normally to achieve improved integration and co-ordination of European research for a fixed period of time.

They do not provide support for research and development.

Coordination Actions are expected to mobilise the necessary means to reach their objectives. There is a minimum requirement for the size of the partnership, however there is no ceiling regarding the maximum number of participants involved.

Coordination Actions differ from the Networks of Excellence in that they are an instrument to support co-ordination or co-operation on a specific objective over a defined period of time and in that there is no requirement for durable integration. They are therefore suited for co-operation to achieve standardisation, define memoranda of understanding or to co-ordinate research initiatives funded from other sources, for example. Coordination Actions are normally well adapted for supporting co-operation involving industrial participants and the research community on specific topics for a specified duration.

While the activities that can be performed in a Coordination Action – apart from training - are the same as those that can be performed in a Specific Support Action (see below), Coordination Actions differ from Specific Support Actions in that they consist of a coherent set of actions, normally involve larger number of participants and have a longer duration. Specific Support Actions are normally performed by a single contractor or a smaller number of participants and normally concern one off events.

#### **Target audience**

Any legal entity may participate in Coordination Actions. However, in practice, the participants in Coordination Actions will be primarily organisations active in research and innovation: enterprises (whatever their size), research institutes, universities, public administrations.

However, organisations that have specific competence in management, dissemination and transfer of knowledge, as well as potential users and stakeholders may also participate.

The “optimum size” of the partnership, in order to ensure the maximum efficiency of the actions, is between 10 and 30 participants, depending on the thematic priority.

### **Activities covered by EU contribution**

- **Co-ordination activities:** activities intended to complement other Framework Programme instruments, consisting of a **coherent set of components**. A work plan covering the range of activities planned must be submitted. These activities can cover:
  - studies, analyses, benchmarking exercises,
  - exchanges and dissemination of information and good practice,
  - exchanges of personnel,
  - organisation of conferences, seminars, meetings,
  - setting up of common information systems, setting up of expert groups,
  - definition, organisation and management of joint or common initiatives,
  - joint memoranda of understanding,
  - pre-standardisation and standardisation activities in specific fields,
  - establishment of roadmaps for research in specific topics.
  
- **Training activities:**
  - exchange and dissemination of good practice,
  - use of common information systems,
  - management of common activities, provided that they are in direct relation with the above co-ordination activities.

Training related to research and innovation activities that are being co-ordinated is excluded.

- **Management of the consortium:** Over and above the technical management of individual work packages, an appropriate management framework linking all the project components and maintaining communications with the Commission is required.

### **Funding mechanism**

Funding takes the form of a “**grant to the budget**”, forming a ceiling for the EU contribution. It consists of the reimbursement of the costs claimed by the participants.

The maximum reimbursement of these costs will be:

- 100% for co-ordination activities (100% of “additional costs” for those participants applying the “additional cost” model);
- 100% for training activities (100% of the “additional costs” for those participants applying the “additional cost” model);
- 100% for management of the consortium (with a maximum of 7% of the EU contribution; for those management costs exceeding the 7% limit, they may be treated as coordination costs; in this case, “additional cost” participants will not be allowed to charge their recurrent costs linked to management activities)

So far, the average EU contribution has varied **from € 0.6 to 1.8 million** per project, depending on the thematic priority, with an **overall average of about € 1 million**.

### **Duration**

The average duration of a Coordination Action up to now has varied from **18 to 36 months** depending on the thematic priority.

If a longer period is necessary and due justification is provided, then a Coordination Action may last for more than three years. A shorter duration can also be allowed if it is possible to reach the objectives in a shorter time.

### **Flexibility**

At its outset, the project will have an agreed **detailed work plan for the whole duration** of the contract.

With the agreement of the Commission, the detailed plan may be modified. However, the overall objectives and principal deliverables, as set out in the contract, are expected to remain unchanged during the lifetime of the project.

### **Enlargement of partnership within the initial budget**

When the consortium is faced with the need to replace a participant (e.g. if one leaves the consortium), the new participant may be selected by the consortium, subject to the Commission's approval and without any increase of the maximum EU contribution to the project.

If participants wish to enlarge their consortium by taking on board a new partner, and they want an increase in the EU contribution, then they must submit a new proposal to the Commission.

### **Specific characteristics**

It should be noted that **no research activity** may be funded from the EU financial contribution to Coordination Actions.

## **Instruments aimed at supporting collaboration, coordination and other activities**

### **Specific Support Actions**

*(formerly accompanying measures)*

#### **Purpose**

Specific Support Actions are aimed at contributing actively to the implementation of the Framework Programme, the analysis and dissemination of results, or the preparation of future activities with a view to enabling the Community to achieve or define its strategic RTD objectives.

They may also be used to stimulate international cooperation, encourage and facilitate the participation of SMEs, small research teams, newly developed and remote research centres, as well as organisations from the new Member States and Associated Candidate Countries in the priority thematic areas, in particular in Integrated Projects and Networks of Excellence.

Specific Support Actions do not provide funding for research and development.

Specific support actions are more limited in scale than co-ordination actions. They may be carried out by **one single participant**, or a group of several partners.

#### **Target audience**

Any legal entity may participate in Specific Support Actions. However, in practice, the participants in Specific Support Actions will be primarily organisations active in research: enterprises (whatever their size), research institutes, universities. In practice, universities and research centres are the main participants in Specific Support Actions.

However, organisations that have specific competence in management, dissemination and transfer of knowledge, as well as potential users and stakeholders may also participate, as may specific information and assistance structures and national contact points.

The “optimum size” of the partnership, in order to ensure the maximum efficiency of the actions, is between 1 and 15 participants, depending on the thematic priority.

While the activities that can be performed in a Specific Support Action– apart from training - are the same as those that can be performed in a Coordination Action (see above), Specific Support Actions differ from Coordination Actions in that they are normally performed by a single contractor or a smaller number of participants and normally concern one-off events. Co-ordination Actions consist of a coherent set of actions, involve larger number of participants and have a longer duration.

#### **Activities covered by EU contribution**

- **Support activities:** these must be set out in a work plan, which may cover one or more activities, such as:

- organisation of conferences and seminars,
  - studies, analyses, benchmarking, mapping exercises,
  - dissemination, transfer and take-up of programme results,
  - development of research or innovation strategies,
  - organisation of high level scientific awards and competitions,
  - setting up of working groups and expert groups,
  - operational support,
  - information and communication activities.
- **Management of the consortium:** Over and above the technical management of individual work packages, an appropriate management framework linking all the project components and maintaining communications with the Commission is required.

### **Funding mechanism**

Funding takes the form of a “**grant to the budget**”, forming a ceiling for the EU contribution. It consists of the reimbursement of the costs claimed by the participants.

The maximum reimbursement of these costs will be:

- 100% for specific support activities (100% of “additional costs” for those participants applying the “additional cost” model);
- 100% for management of the consortium (with a maximum of 7% of the EU contribution; those management costs exceeding the 7% limit may be treated as coordination costs; however, in this case, “additional cost” participants will not be allowed to charge their recurrent costs linked to management activities).

So far, the average EU contribution to Specific Support Actions has varied **from € 0.03 to 0.8 million**, depending on the thematic priority, with an **overall average of about € 0.5 million**.

### **Duration**

The average duration of a Specific Support Action up to now has varied from **9 to 30 months**, depending on the thematic priority.

The duration may exceed 36 months only in justified cases.

### **Flexibility**

At its outset, the project will have an agreed **detailed work plan for the whole duration** of the contract. With the agreement of the Commission, the detailed work plan may be modified. However, the overall objectives and principal deliverables are expected to remain unchanged during the lifetime of the project.

### **Enlargement of the partnership within initial budget**

When the consortium is faced with the need to replace a participant, (e.g. if one leaves the consortium), the new participant may be selected by the consortium, subject to the

Commission's approval and without any increase in the maximum EU contribution to the project.

If participants wish to enlarge their consortium by taking on board a new partner, and they want an increase in the EU contribution, then they must submit a new proposal to the Commission.

**Specific characteristics**

It should be noted that **no research activity** may be funded from the EU financial contribution to a Specific Support Action.

*CR RTD-B2*