

WORK PROGRAMME 2012-2013

CAPACITIES

PART 3

REGIONS OF KNOWLEDGE

(European Commission C (2011) 5023 of 19 July 2011)

Capacities Work Programme: Regions of Knowledge

The work programme presented here provides one call for proposals on '*Transnational cooperation between regional research-driven clusters*'.

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Objective

Strengthening the research potential of European regions, in particular by encouraging and supporting regional 'research-driven clusters' associating universities, research centres, enterprises, regional authorities and other stakeholders across Europe.

I CONTEXT

Innovation Union aspects of the 'Capacities' work programme

The Innovation Union initiative underlines that research and innovation are key drivers of competitiveness, jobs, sustainable growth and social progress. The work programme 2012-2013 has been designed to support the implementation of the Innovation Union Initiative and in particular to bring together research and innovation to address major challenges.

The focus on innovation will be reflected in the description of the objectives and scope of the specific topics, as well as in the expected impact statements. The innovation dimension of the proposals will be evaluated under the evaluation criterion 'Expected Impact'.

Approach for 2012-2013

The 'Regions of Knowledge' action in FP7 responds to a need at European level to increase the overall capacity of European regional players to boost innovation based on research and technology development (R & D). The goal is to enable regions to strengthen their capacity for investing in and conducting research and technological development activities in a way which can contribute significantly to their sustainable economic development. To this end, 'Regions of Knowledge' will support the cooperation, development and integration of **regional research-driven clusters**¹ on a transnational basis. Throughout FP7 so far 'Regions of Knowledge' has successfully initiated a process of transnational collaboration of clusters and their parent regions in dedicated economic and technological sectors that will harness R & D for regional development in synergy with the EU regional policy and the related structural funds. Mutual learning and exchange of best practices took place at European level that could not have been achieved by national or other European funding programmes.

¹ Research-driven clusters must be composed of at least three types of legal entities (so called 'triple helix'), namely:

- legal entities conducting research (universities, research organisations and research for-profit bodies); national entities conducting research can be accepted if their organisational structure is broken down at regional level and if the regional structure involved is located in the same region as the other components of the cluster;
- business entities (large enterprises and SMEs as defined in the EC recommendation 2003/361/CE of 6 May 2003, OJ L 124/36, 20/05/2003) or their local groupings;
- regional/local authorities (local and regional government, regional development agencies); national entities can be accepted to represent regional authorities either in small Member States made up of only one NUTS II region (plus Slovenia which has two NUTS II regions) or if their organisational structure is broken down at regional level and their regional representation is located in (or is effectively in charge of) the same region than the other components of the cluster; specialised regional entities. Where appropriate research-driven clusters may involve as well, in addition to the three previous categories, other regional/local relevant stakeholders such as technology transfer offices, chambers of crafts, commerce and industry, financial entities (such as banks and saving banks)

This work programme 2012-2013 orients the initiative closer to the Europe 2020 strategy² (and its flagship initiatives, notably the 'Innovation Union'³, 'A digital agenda for Europe'⁴ and 'Resource efficient Europe'⁵. The 'Regions of Knowledge' action will promote synergies between regional research and innovation policies, primarily by supporting the development of regional research agendas and Joint Action Plans (JAP) which regional authorities can integrate into their economic development strategy as a basis for increased and more focused use of the Structural Funds and other regional development instruments. The policy context for 'Regions of Knowledge' has been outlined by various communications from the European Commission e.g. on the Innovation Union, the Communication on world class clusters⁶, the Communication on Regional Policy⁷ and the Communication on the digital agenda⁴. In particular the work programme 2012-2013 addresses key issues of the Innovation Union as it will help to overcome the fragmentation of the knowledge economy in Europe by initiating border-crossing collaboration of research-driven clusters and regions.

Research-driven clusters create an innovative and creative ecosystem where academia and business work together and turn excellent research results into new products and services. The participating clusters will set up Joint Action Plans where they will systematically design the unlocking of new finance sources in a complementary and synergetic manner. Clusters are expected to stimulate investments in R & D and ICT in particular and boost innovative eco-design approaches (see description of topic). Trans-national collaboration on design in an environmental context will promote openness of innovation and capitalise on the creative potential of Europe. Within the research driven clusters supported by 'Regions of Knowledge' it is expected that SMEs play a role as key innovation actors that absorb excellent R & D results and turn them into novel products, services and processes. In addition, excellent research driven clusters will provide the framework for innovative SMEs and other companies, once successfully embedded in the clusters, to internationalise and unlock novel business opportunities on global markets beyond Europe. For that reason the work programme 2012-2013 of "Regions of Knowledge foresees a mandatory internationalisation action to be implemented in a bottom up manner according to the needs of the clusters involved. Internationalisation can either be accomplished by the inclusion of additional international partners to the consortium in line with the FP7 rules for international co-operation or conceptually by development of strategies for internationalisation in the thematic domains specified in this work programme that should become a deliverable of the project.

At the operational level, the work programme 2012-2013 will leave more flexibility for regional players and research actors to customise the activities to regional demands in view of the need for smart specialisation⁷.

The specific goals of the 'Regions of Knowledge' action therefore are:

- Fostering trans-national, including cross-border, co-operation between high potential

² COM(2010) 2020 : Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

³ COM(2010) 546 : Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative, Innovation Union

⁴ COM(2010) 245 : A Digital Agenda for Europe

⁵ COM(2011) 21 : A resource-efficient Europe – Flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 Strategy

⁶ COM(2008) 652 : Towards world-class clusters in the European Union: Implementing the broad-based innovation strategy

⁷ COM(2010) 553 : Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020

research driven clusters in areas or topics of common interest. Projects should respond to challenges from the globalisation of markets, technological change or the evolution of the research framework in the European context and initiate mutual learning between regional actors (legal entities conducting research, business entities, regional/local authorities);

- Improving links between regional authorities, research entities and the local business community for the development of specific regional RTD policies and also partnerships in national or European initiatives;
- Developing Joint Action Plans (JAPs) at the regional and European level to increase regional economic competitiveness through research, technological development activities and innovation in traditional or emerging business sectors. JAPs will also explore opportunities for mobilising financial and other forms of support offered by national/regional authorities, private investments and by EU programmes (Research Framework Programme, CIP and the Structural Funds), in order to exploit the synergies between regional, national and EU programmes for research and economic development.
- Boosting the competitiveness of the regional research-driven clusters via dedicated internationalisation measures;
- Mentoring regions with a less developed research profile to support their capacity in setting up and developing regional research-driven clusters.
- Promoting the visibility of regional research-driven clusters by targeted dissemination actions including regional stakeholders and the wider public.

II CONTENT OF THE CALL

This section describes all the topics for which proposals will be called in this work programme. This concerns only the content of the calls. For all practical modalities related to these calls, please refer to section III 'Implementation of calls'. For actions not implemented through calls for proposals, please refer to section IV 'Other actions'.

The activities listed on the following pages of this Work Programme will be implemented in the following area:

Area: 3.1. Transnational cooperation between regional research-driven clusters

The 'Regions of Knowledge' action supports the development, cooperation and integration of innovative and high potential research-driven clusters in order to make happen more and better RTD investments at regional level and support European competitiveness worldwide. Proposals must demonstrate a clear exploitation potential in their regions and should help actors in the regions to make the best use of EU instruments such as the Research Framework Programmes, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme or the Structural Funds. For the implementation of this work programme, regions shall not necessarily be defined along administrative boundaries or according to the European statistical NUTS nomenclature.

Scope of Activities

The work programme 2012-2013 will develop '**Transnational cooperation between regional research-driven clusters**' by covering the following action lines

- Analysis, development and implementation of research agendas.
- Mentoring of regions with a less developed research profile by highly developed ones (optional).
- Internationalisation activities / strategies with third countries.
- Initiatives to improve integration of research actors and institutions in regional economies.

Topic: REGIONS-2012-2013-1

Description of topic

In the 2012-13 call, proposals shall support transnational co-operation of clusters that are active in one of following two domains:

a) RTD and innovation aspects of EU digital agenda

Co-ordination and Support Actions (CSA) within 'Regions of Knowledge' will support the transnational co-operation of high potential research-driven clusters that address the research and innovation aspects of the EU digital agenda (section 2.5 of COM(2010) 245 final/2,

26.8.2010)⁸. Areas of particular interest are reinforcement of e-Infrastructures, cloud computing applications for government and science, new generation of web based applications and services including multilingual content, Internet of Things and key enabling technologies in ICT.

Clusters should have the capability to leverage private investment in ICT research and to build sustainable partnerships between research and business. Such partnerships will drive initiatives for open innovation in order to develop new ICT based products and services in their regions with the potential to perform on international markets. (

Clusters in this domain are especially encouraged to contribute to setting up a regional digital agenda for the sake of competitiveness but also to foster digital literacy, skills and inclusion in order to overcome regional disparities, also including social innovation.

b) Development of technologies and services relevant for the implementation of a 'resource efficient Europe'

Coordination and Support Actions (CSA) under 'Regions of Knowledge' will support the transnational cooperation of research-driven clusters that are active in the development of technologies and services relevant for the realisation of the resource-efficient Europe. They should underpin the shift towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon economy to achieve sustainable growth which are in line with the Communication on 'A resource-efficient Europe – Flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 Strategy'⁹ (COM(2011)21). The addressed technologies should increase the efficiency of using materials, water and energy. Application areas are for example renewable energies, smart grids, recycling, waste management, clean technologies, water treatment and eco-design.

Clusters in both domains should have the capability to build sustainable partnerships between research and business, leverage private and public investments and drive the implementation of the Innovation Union. On the grounds of a sound business strategy, clusters are especially encouraged to contribute to setting up **smart specialisation strategies** in the regions.

Projects should favour innovative and cross-disciplinary approaches. Applications may address both domains in one proposal if justified from an S & T point of view. However, no preference will be given to such proposals in comparison to those addressing only one domain.

Type of activities/work and their implementation

The activities listed in this section apply for both domains of this Work Programme and linked to the area of **Transnational cooperation** will be implemented through **Coordination and Support Actions (Coordinating) (CSA-CA)**, which will support projects covering **all** of the following steps:

⁸ COM(2010) 245 : A Digital Agenda for Europe

⁹ COM(2011) 21 : Resource efficient Europe

- **Analysis and integration of research agendas of actors in regional clusters**

Project partners will perform a detailed analysis of the state of play of the identified research-driven clusters and of additional regional capabilities around which research could be carried out. For the selected domains, the analysis shall involve the identification of relevant issues and components, including:

- The existing regional RTD policies, plans and activities, their evolution and their impact;
- Regional public and private RTD actors including universities and infrastructure facilities;
- Financial actors (e.g. banks, venture capitalists, business angels) relevant for R & D and innovation
- The strengths and weaknesses of the regions concerned in terms of their capacity to produce knowledge and transfer it into novel products, services and processes ;
- The existing regional smart specialisation strategies if applicable
- The existing regional cluster policy and initiatives;
- Economic development strengths, opportunities and needs, and economic development policies;
- European and international context, with a reference to possible links to existing European Technology Platforms, Joint Technology Initiatives or other European projects.

This analysis shall cover the possibilities of synergies and opportunities for mutual learning and exchange of best practices and of cooperation possibilities between the regional actors involved in regional research-driven clusters. It shall also cover the preparation of an international cooperation strategy, with a clear identification of clusters from third countries¹⁰ and of cooperation possibilities in RTD and innovation support services with these clusters. Such international co-operation component aims at strengthening the competitiveness of the participating clusters by opening up new business opportunities.

Optionally, the analysis may include possibilities of mentoring for capacity building, with identification of the targeted emerging European clusters, if not already identified in the proposal¹¹,

It shall be made with the involvement of local stakeholders concerned as part of the consensus building and dissemination processes around the project.

The outputs will be: (1) a directory of RTD offer and demand, (2) a global analysis including an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) from an economic, innovation and R&D perspective and (3) an analysis of the complementarities of the partners involved in the consortium for the particular scientific and technological domain or economic sector targeted by the project.

¹⁰ Any country other than Member States or Associated Countries.

¹¹ In this case, the proposal should at least include a clear commitment to mentoring as well as the methodology and schedule to be followed to identify them.

- **Initiatives to improve integration: definition of a Joint Action Plan**

Project partners shall define a Joint Action Plan (JAP) that describes their strategy to drive economic development through research and technological development and innovation activities in a selected topic or economic sector and enhance the whole value-added chain of innovation.

This JAP may comprise regionally specific activities. It will include the design of measures **such as**:

- Innovation measures to facilitate the development of new products, services and processes on the grounds of excellent research results, recruitment of innovation assistants;
- Increasing researcher mobility, including mobility between research and industry;
- Improving and sharing RTD infrastructure and other facilities;
- Identifying relevant (collaborative) research and technological development related projects;
- Enhancing skills and knowledge transfer (including technology transfer and intellectual property management) between business entities and between research entities and business entities, in particular SMEs, through networking;
- Involving universities and other higher education establishments the process of knowledge transfer e.g. via dedicated measures for personnel exchange, upgrading of skills for human resources and joint R&D undertakings, liaison with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT);
- Improving availability of, and access to, SME and innovation support services, including the facilities provided under Europe INNOVA (under CIP);
- Facilitating access to private and/or public funding for RTD and innovation, including venture capital, the risk sharing facility (RSSF), mobilisation of pre-commercial procurement or structural funds;
- Other relevant business support measures;
- Mentoring activities for capacity building in regions with a less-developed research profile in order to bring them in the position to design and implement their own actions for the setting up of new regional research-driven clusters.

The Joint Action Plan **must** include the following mandatory components:

- Dissemination activities through conferences, workshops, publications, web-based initiatives and any other relevant events or activities, including public awareness raising measures, especially among economic actors in their regions.
- Internationalisation activities to prepare clusters for global competition and to unlock new business opportunities. This Joint Action Plan shall identify the partners involved, objectives, activities (what to do), responsibilities (who does what) and schedule for trans-national (European) and international cooperation with third countries. International partners need not necessarily become participants of the project consortium.

- The financial plan (FP) describing in details the sources of funding for the implementation of the Joint Action Plan.

The Joint Action Plan shall include clear targets in terms of outputs for the measures underpinned by verifiable indicators.

The Joint Action Plan shall also clearly define how the different measures foreseen will be funded by using possibilities available at national and at regional / local level, including private investments, or at EU level (Research Framework Programmes, Competitiveness and Innovation Programme, Structural Funds). In particular, it must include the involvement of the management authority for the Structural Funds in the concerned regions at an early stage if applicable. This condition only applies for participants from EU member states. Participants from associated countries are encouraged but not obliged to explore options of collaboration with their national regional development authorities.

The Joint Action Plan should make clear the complementarities between the proposed actions and the EU regional policy programmes of the regions concerned (funded under the EU Structural Funds).

- **Measures towards the implementation of the Joint Action Plan**

The specific measures identified for implementation in the Joint Action Plan (e.g., R&D projects, researchers' mobility, collaborative research projects, infrastructure, skills enhancement, access to finance, etc) will **not** be funded by the 'Regions of Knowledge' co-ordination actions. Nevertheless, it is expected that these implementation measures are already launched during the life time of the CSA project.

Co-ordination activities relating to mentoring, international cooperation and dissemination will be funded under 'Regions of Knowledge'. Other activities to co-ordinate and accompany the implementation of the Joint Action Plan (e.g., other staff exchange or trust-building activities for members of the clusters, research intelligence, joint trainings, joint recruitment campaigns for research staff, identification and definition of research related projects...) can also be funded¹².

Conditions for participating clusters:

The clusters in the consortium submitting a proposal shall be high potential, high-growth research-driven clusters. They have to prove their high potential to upgrade in face of the global competition. In addition these clusters must respond to the needs of the research intensive business community in the regions. They should have the capacity to become drivers of innovation in their regions with business partners able to absorb knowledge from excellent research partners and turn them into novel products, processes and services.

¹² Open business partnering events will not be funded under this call, but partners can take advantage of the opportunities offered in that respect under Europe INNOVA (<http://www.europe-innova.org>).

Clusters involved shall demonstrate in their proposal their high potential and current state of development in terms, for example, of membership (business and research entities), workforce (including researchers), turnover, foreign direct investment, R&D expenditure, collaborative projects, exploitation of R&D results, spin-offs, start-ups, patents generated, intellectual property management, as well as services offered to their members and their financing. Partner entities conducting research have to be already and demonstrably involved in RTD activities supported by national, regional or European programmes that are closely linked to the economically relevant technological or scientific areas.

The cluster as a whole may be represented through one legal entity; the proposal shall demonstrate that it conforms to the definition of a regional research-driven cluster.

If such a legal entity does not exist, two possibilities are proposed:

a) if a legal arrangement¹³ between the members exists for one member of the cluster to be allowed to legally represent all the others (and the envisaged representative must have a clear mandate to represent and act on behalf of all other members of the 'research-driven cluster') then this member can represent all the research-driven cluster;

b) the cluster is represented by all its legal entities being direct partners at least one legal entity conducting research, one business entity and one public authority being part of the cluster shall be direct partners of the project consortium.

The clusters involved shall clearly indicate in their proposal the potential for growth and competitiveness foreseen in the targeted sector through the proposed cooperation. Furthermore the proposed project shall address one or both of the domains set out in this work programme.

This information shall not be considered as eligibility criteria but shall be taken into account during the evaluation for the respective evaluation criteria.

'Regions of Knowledge' will support consortia of partners representing at least three regional research-driven clusters from at least three different EU Member States and/or Associated Countries.

The maximum duration of the projects will be 36 months.

The applicable Funding Scheme is 'Coordination and Support Actions' (**Coordinating Action (CSA-CA)**). The EU contribution to be envisaged for projects will be approximately from EUR 1 to 3 million. The size of the budget should be coherent with the activities to be undertaken and the size of the applicant. The EU financial contribution may reach a maximum of 100% of the total eligible costs.

¹³ It can be an existing legal arrangement or a legal arrangement specifically elaborated before the submission of the proposal (or before the entry into force of the grant agreement) but its scope can not be limited to the participation and the duration of the project and must cover other activities implemented by the cluster.

Specific impact expected: The impacts listed below apply for both domains and should be underpinned by verifiable success indicators stated in the proposal.

- Boosting the competitiveness of research-driven clusters in the domains of digital agenda and resource efficient technologies Europe-wide and globally, unlocking new business opportunities for participating SMEs.
- Build sustainable partnerships between academia and business within clusters and trans-nationally across clusters and regions, facilitating the knowledge transfer from academia to business in order to develop novel services, products and processes.
- Contribution to the development of smart specialisation strategies of regions¹⁴ through R&D and Innovation in the field of digital agenda and resource efficient technologies.
- New private and public investments in R&D and Innovation at regional level driven by regional strategies based on business needs and an integrated Joint Action Plan, access to finance facilitated for SMEs, synergies created with other EU and national funding sources.
- Create an innovation friendly ecosystem in the regions through close and sustainable collaboration and networking between universities, research centres, business, local policy makers and other stakeholders.
- Include more European regions into the European Research Area (ERA) while involving relevant regional stakeholder for the design of research agendas.

¹⁴ COM(2010) 553: Regional Policy contributing to smart growth in Europe 2020

III IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CALL

For description of the topics of the call, please refer to section II 'Content of the call'

Call title: Transnational cooperation between regional research-driven clusters

- **Call identifier:** *FP7-REGIONS-2012-2013-1 – single stage*
- **Date of publication:** 20 July 2011¹⁵
No further calls will be published in 2012 or 2013.
- **Deadline:** 31 January 2012 at 17.00.00, Brussels local time¹⁶
- **Indicative budget:** *EUR 17.99 million for 2012*¹⁷
- **Topics called:**

Activity/ Area	Topics called	Funding Schemes
<i>REGIONS-2012-2013-1.</i> <u>Transnational cooperation between regional research-driven clusters</u>	In the 2012-2013 call, proposals should address either one or both of the following domains: a) RTD and innovation aspects of EU digital agenda b) Development of technologies and services relevant for the implementation of a 'resource efficient Europe'	<i>CSA-CA</i> <i>(Coordinating Action)</i>

- Eligibility conditions:
 - The general eligibility criteria for the different funding schemes are set out in Annex 2 to this work programme and in the guide for applicants. Please note that the completeness criterion also includes that part B of the proposal shall be readable, accessible and printable
 - The minimum number of participants: Consortia of partners representing a minimum of three regional research-driven clusters from at least three different EU Member States and/or Associated Countries. Research-driven clusters must be composed of at least three types of legal entities (so called 'triple helix'), namely:
 - legal entities conducting research (universities, research organisations and research for-profit bodies); national entities conducting research can be accepted if their

¹⁵ The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date of publication.

¹⁶ The Director-General responsible may delay this deadline by up to two months.

¹⁷ On condition that the draft budget for 2012 is adopted without modifications by the budgetary authority. It is expected that this call budget will be increased significantly using 2013 appropriations, subject to the adoption of the 2013 budget by the European Parliament and the Council.

organisational structure is broken down at regional level and if the regional structure involved is located in the same region as the other components of the cluster;

- business entities (large enterprises and SMEs as defined in the EC recommendation 2003/361/CE of 6 May 2003, OJ L 124/36, 20/05/2003) or their local groupings;
- regional/local authorities (local and regional government, regional development agencies); national entities can be accepted to represent regional authorities either in small Member States made up of only one NUTS II region (plus Slovenia which has two NUTS II regions), or if their organisational structure is broken down at regional level and their regional representation is located in (or is effectively in charge of) the same region as the other components of the cluster; specialised regional entities, can be accepted if they are in charge of the design and/or the implementation of the relevant regional policy.

In any case each member of the cluster directly involved in the project's activities should be clearly identified in the proposal.

- Evaluation procedure:

- The evaluation criteria (including weights and thresholds) and sub-criteria together with the eligibility, selection and award criteria, for the different funding schemes are set out in Annex 2 to this work programme.
- The evaluation will follow a single stage procedure.
- Proposals will not be evaluated anonymously.
- Proposals may be evaluated remotely.

- Indicative evaluation and contractual timetable: *Evaluation results are estimated to be available within 4 months after the deadline; grant agreement signature: it is estimated that the first grant agreements related to the call will come into force 9 months after the closure date.*

- Consortia agreements: *Participants are encouraged, but not required, to conclude a consortium agreement.*

The forms of grant and maximum reimbursement rates which will be offered are specified in Annex 3 to the Capacities work programme. The EU financial contribution may reach a maximum of 100 % of the total eligible costs.

- Use of flat rates for subsistence costs:

In accordance with Annex 3 of this work programme, this call provides for the possibility to use flat rates to cover subsistence costs incurred by beneficiaries during travel carried out within grants for indirect actions. For further information, see the relevant Guides for Applicants for this call. The applicable flat rates are available at the following website: ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/flat-rates-subsistence_en.pdf.

IV OTHER ACTIONS¹⁸ (not implemented through calls for proposals)

Evaluations, monitoring and review:

Appointed external experts will be used for the evaluation, monitoring, review of project proposals. For these activities the indicative budget is EUR 0.40 million.

Indicative budget: EUR 0.40 million

Funding scheme: Coordination and Support Action - Coordinating Action - Expert contracts

¹⁸ In accordance with Articles 14, 17 and 27 of Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 of 18 December 2006 laying down the rules for the participation of undertakings, research centres and universities in actions under the Seventh Framework Programme and for the dissemination of research results (2007-2013).

V BUDGET for the Regions of Knowledge Activity for the 2012-2013 work programme

Activities	Budget 2012 (EUR million)
Call <i>FP7-REGIONS-2012-2013-1</i>	<i>17.99^{17,19}</i>
<i>2012-2013 Evaluations, monitoring and review</i>	<i>0.41</i>
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGET	<i>18.40</i>

Budget figures in this work programme

All budgetary figures given in this work programme are indicative. The final budget awarded to actions implemented through call for proposals may vary by up to 10% of the total value of the indicated budget for the call.

For actions not implemented through calls for proposals:

- The final budgets for evaluation, monitoring and review may vary by up to 20% of the indicated budgets for these actions;
- The final budget awarded for all other actions not implemented through calls for proposals may vary by up to 10% of the indicated budget for these actions.

¹⁹ A reserve list may be produced of projects that pass the different thresholds of the evaluation but fall below the available indicative budget of a call, in case additional budget becomes available.