

EU research funding for the Medtech industry

In 2007 the European Commission (EC) launched the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), which currently represents the largest research funding programme in the world with an overall budget of around Euro 53 billion. With the start of the new framework programme for research and innovation, „Horizon 2020“, scheduled for 2014, FP7 is now entering its final phase. The final call for submission of project proposals under FP7 was published by the EC on July 10th 2012. In this round, a record budget of around Euro 838 million is allocated to R&D projects in the “Health” programme.

This is the last opportunity for Bavarian players to submit proposals and to apply for FP7 funding as the next round of calls is unlikely to start until the beginning of 2014. Importantly, not only universities and research institutions can submit proposals but companies are also encouraged to present innovative project ideas. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular, a variety of funding oppor-



The international network of science and business is one of the hallmarks of European research funding programmes ■



tunities in different areas exist. Amongst these, several calls for proposals in the field of medical technology have been published. The Bavarian Research Alliance (BayFOR) provides information about the current funding opportunities arising for Bavarian scientists and entrepreneurs.■

Areas of relevance for the Medtech industry, “Health” and “New Materials”

The EC has anchored medical technology research in two major areas of FP7, “Health” and “Nanosciences, nanotechnologies, materials and new production technologies (NMP)”. The focus of the Health programme is on translational research, i.e. the transfer of basic research results into clinical practice, as well as development and validation of new therapeutic applications, diagnostic tools and technologies, health promotion and prevention strategies.

A total budget of around Euro 615 million is available for the final round of calls within the NMP programme. With regard to medical technology of particular interest are research projects in the field of nanotechnology and nanosciences aiming at improving health (biomaterials) and developing new diagnostic tools and treatment strategies for Europe. ■

SME participation is highly encouraged

Ideally, research proposals should address cutting-edge research questions, find solutions for these questions, and have a clear benefit for the European population. Moreover, the EU aims to strengthen European SMEs by making it easier for them to participate in European funding programmes. Thus, participation of partners from industry is not only desirable and in some cases even mandatory but also increases the chances to receive funding considerably. In „Horizon 2020“ supporting and encouraging SME participation will be one of the key aims. This could represent a clear advantage for universities of applied sciences as they are generally well connected to industry. Another focus of FP7 is on improving the coordination of national and regional research funding programmes through specific instruments known as **ERA-NETs**. In this context the **EuroTransBio** initiative is of particular interest for SMEs. Calls for proposals in this initiative have a bottom-up

approach, i.e. no restriction on the research topic, and support transnational applied R&D projects between academia and SMEs in the field of biotechnology. Through ERA-NET projects, the EU aims to better coordinate, connect, and group together the technological strengths and financial resources of the companies involved.

Similarly, **EUREKA Eurostars** also has a bottom-up approach and promotes transnational initiatives supporting SMEs in the development of innovative products and processes. ■

Ways to a successful EU project

The large variety of available funding opportunities could confront potential applicants with a complex task as identifying a suitable funding programme and writing a successful proposal requires pro-



Advances in imaging methods are one of the EU's key aspects ■

found expertise. In this regard, the Bavarian Research Alliance could provide extensive assistance to key Bavarian players from academic science and industry. Supported by the Bavarian State Ministry of Sciences, Research and the Arts, BayFOR provides information about different funding programmes and offers training courses. Moreover, BayFOR supports the initial stages of the



proposal design as well as the proposal writing and assists the setting up of international consortia.

Efficient assistance in international project initiation: The Bavarian University Funding Programme

In 2012 the Bavarian State Ministry of Sciences, Research and the Arts launched the new 'Bavarian University Funding Programme for the Initiation of International Projects' to promote cooperation projects between scientists at public Bavarian universities and international research institutions. This funding programme is designed to establish promising international research cooperations and offers grants for travel and subsistence. By providing support in the initial phase of international cooperation projects this funding programme closes a currently existing gap in the funding system. Thus, it enables researchers to exchange ideas and expertise in person and advance their work more efficiently. BayFOR has been commissioned with the handling of this new funding programme.

Further information:

www.bayfor.org/bayerisches-hochschulfoerderprogramm

Upon successful evaluation, BayFOR can also assist with contract negotiations with the EC and if required provides support with project management and dissemination of results throughout the project.

BayFOR has an excellent network at the regional and international level. Its EU Liaison Office in Brussels represents the interests of Bavarian universities, increases their visibility and provides contacts to relevant actors in the European institutions.

Moreover, BayFOR coordinates the joint activities of the Bavarian Research Cooperations and supports the expansion of their networks at the European level. Furthermore, the Scientific Coordination Office Bavaria-Québec/Alberta/International supports bilateral research projects in these regions and develops such initiatives further in the context of European research funding.

As a partner in the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), BayFOR also provides targeted advisory services for SMEs interested in participating in EU research projects or wishing to cooperate with other companies across national borders.

In the Bavarian 'Haus der Forschung' (House of Research) BayFOR works closely with Bayern Innovativ GmbH, the 'Innovations- und Technologiezentrum Bayern' (Bavarian Centre for Innovation and Technology, ITZB), and the 'Bayerische For-

schungsstiftung' (Bavarian Research Foundation, BFS). Together, these four partners are able to cover all aspects of research and technology funding on a regional, national and European level and offer a comprehensive range of services. ■

Links:

www.bayfor.org

www.hausderforschung.bayern.de

Official FP7 website:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/home_de.html

Horizon 2020 – the new framework programme for research and innovation:

<http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/>

Contact:



Dr. rer. nat. Iana Parvanova

Head of
Unit Health research
& Biotechnology

Bavarian Research Alliance
(BayFOR) GmbH

Prinzregentenstr. 52
80538 Munich/Germany
Phone: +49 (0)89 - 9901888-150
E-mail: parvanova@bayfor.org
www.bayfor.org