

Guideline for applicants

The first call for applications (pre-proposals) for transnational research in organic food and farming systems launched by CORE Organic II

Closing date for pre-proposals: 15 October 2010, 13.00 CET



CORE Organic II is an ERA-NET funded by the European Commission's 7^{th} Framework Programme

Contract no. 249667

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1 BACKGROUND OF THE CALL

CORE Organic is the acronym for "Coordination of European Transnational Research in Organic Food and Farming Systems". As an ERA-NET action, it intends to increase cooperation between national research activities.

In FP6, CORE Organic I was established by 11 European partner countries, and the action realized eight transnational research projects between 2007 and 2010. CORE Organic II has now been extended to 22 partner countries. The first CORE Organic II call for research proposals is launched on 1 September 2010.

The overall objective of CORE Organic II is to enhance quality, relevance and utilization of resources in European research in organic food and farming and to establish a joint pool for financing transnational research in organic food and farming.

The specific objectives of the CORE Organic II network are

- to increase exchange of information and expertise
- to coordinate existing research.

The background for these objectives is that the public European research and development effort in organic food and farming is characterized by small research communities, often scattered and fragmented both geographically and institutionally. This generates a need for gathering the dispersed expertise into a critical mass, to maintain and increase the competitive quality and relevance of research.

Core Organic II is launching a transnational joint call for research project proposals based on funds from participating countries. Thanks to the agreement of the partners on common prioritized research areas, the CORE Organic II network will enable a better use of research funding whereas the human resources as well as research facilities will be complementary and more effectively utilized.

2 THEMATIC RESEARCH AREAS – CALL TEXT

Research project consortia should apply to one¹ of the three thematic research areas (Cropping, Monogastric or Quality) which will be funded according to the funding table given in Annex B. The pre-proposals should be structured around the topics (one or more) listed under each of the thematic research areas.

2.1. CROPPING: DESIGNING ROBUST AND PRODUCTIVE CROPPING SYSTEMS AT FIELD, FARM AND LANDSCAPE LEVEL

Rationale: Successful organic horticultural and arable crop production requires the development of innovative management options to enhance productivity and yield stability by using natural resources (e.g. water, soil, biodiversity) more efficiently through eco-functional intensification (based on biological processes and agrobiodiversity) at the appropriate scales. This needs to be achieved while protecting the environment and valuing ecosystem functions, so that organic agriculture may contribute to improving resource use, efficiency and diversity.

The thematic research area includes the following topics:

• Improving pest, weed and disease control in horticultural production and other relevant cropping systems by

¹ Please note a change compared with the pre-announcement published 5 July 2010: "one (or more)" is now changed to "one".



optimizing ecological support functions at field, farm and/or landscape levels. Strategies could include the identification of novel pests and diseases, and consider a range of techniques and their interactions, e.g. management techniques or breeding research for disease resistance.

- Increasing the efficiency and availability of nutrient supply and maintenance in arable farming through functional soil biology, innovative plant nutrient sources, optimized crop rotations and recycling of high quality organic matter sources.
- Reducing the use of problematic off-farm inputs and minimizing emissions through efficient and innovative use of natural resources and processes at field, farm and landscape levels.
- Identifying innovative and viable forms of collaboration between farms to increase productivity and resilience within a range of socio-economic and production contexts, and at the appropriate scale at which they should occur for different functions (e.g. nutrient recycling, pest and disease management, weed control, ecosystem services).

2.2. MONOGASTRIC: ROBUST AND COMPETITIVE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS FOR PIGS, POULTRY AND FISH

Rationale: Organic pig and poultry production and aquaculture have increased over the last decade but significant challenges hamper widespread conversion to organic management and the further development of these sectors. Research is needed to solve challenges regarding disease management, feeding, welfare and negative impacts on the environment, while complying with EU regulations on outdoor access and organic agriculture, and securing economic competitiveness.

Innovative monogastric production systems require thematic research to improve:

- Disease management strategies based on prevention and alternative treatments.
- Animal welfare in relation to housing and the use and management of outdoor areas while considering environmental impacts.
- Organic feed (including 100% organic feed) that supplies sufficient levels of essential amino acids without
 excessive protein for poultry and pigs according to individual species physiology. Improved feed strategies
 that minimise environmental impacts may consider innovative crops, crop rotations, land use, degree of selfreliance, etc.
- Aquaculture based on robust species and breeds, with effective disease management and minimal environmental impacts, that meets EU regulations on organic aquaculture.
- Feed for farmed fish that partially replaces fish meal and oils with innovative plant protein sources while meeting fish requirements for protein and phosphorus. Research should consider levels of omega 3 fatty acids and complex carbohydrates in relation to physiological capacity.

2.3. QUALITY: ENSURING QUALITY AND SAFETY OF ORGANIC FOOD ALONG THE WHOLE CHAIN

Rationale: High quality is one of the main objectives of organic production. Consumers also expect processed organic food to be of outstanding quality. However, the specific principles of processing (Article 6 of the Organic Farming Regulation) are not precisely defined and standards have not been elaborated. Tools need to be developed and made available to assess quality characteristics for organic food processing and to align the processing of organic food with the principles of Organic Farming Regulation Article 6 b/c/d (Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007), minimizing environmental impact and safeguarding food safety.

The thematic research area includes the following topics:

- Development of careful processing methods and new technologies limiting the use of additives or nonorganic ingredients and ensuring food quality and safety.
- Development of quality criteria, analysis methods and technologies ensuring the quality of organic products



during processing and along the production chain.

• Development of analytical methods, markers, and other concepts for documentation of organic production and for the prevention of fraud.

3 PARTICIPATION AND FUNDING OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

The funding for the transnational projects will be based on a 'virtual common pot' instrument. This means that each national funding body funds its national researchers in the transnational project consortium.

Indicative funds from participating countries per thematic research area are listed in Annex B. These amounts may be allocated to one or more projects.

Participating research institutions in projects that have been selected for funding will receive the grant directly from their national funding body according to their terms and conditions.

Applicants from non-partner countries or from countries not providing funding for a specific thematic area of the call are welcome in a Project Consortium, if their costs are covered by their own resources or by other sources. They are not taken into account in the minimum requirement of eligible partners and countries in the CORE Organic II eligibility criteria.

4 CALL SCHEDULE

The call involves a 2-step procedure with submission and selection of pre-proposals and, subsequently, shortlisted consortia are invited to submit full-proposals. The respective time schedule and activities required are listed in the table below.



Table 1. Time schedule of the call - 2-Stage Call Process

ACTION	SCHEDULED	
STAGE 1		
Closing date for pre-proposals	15 October 2010, 13.00 CET	
Eligibility, quality and relevance check. Prioritisation and selection of pre- proposals.	October-November 2010	
Invitation letters for submission of full-proposal	30 November 2010	
STAGE 2		
Closing date for full-proposals	31 January 2011	
Scientific peer-review	February-April 2011	
Prioritisation and selection of projects	Late April; early May 2011	
Notifications letters	15 May 2011	
Amendment of project plans and budget (if applicable)	10 June 2011	
Contract negotiation	June-July 2011	
Start of projects	From September 2011	

5 CALL SECRETARIAT

The Call Secretariat will provide administrative support to applicants regarding the call, call documents and procedures. It is the primary point of contact between the Research Project Consortium and the CORE Organic II Governing Board for all general matters in relation to the call.

CORE Organic II Call Secretariat

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The National Contact Points are supporting the Call Secretariat and should be contacted for all matters regarding national regulations and funding. Please see Annex A for contact information of National Contact Points.

6 SUBMISSION OF PRE-PROPOSALS

Application for funding is a two-stage process with a "pre-proposal step" leading to a "full-proposal step" for the selected pre-proposals.

The call announcements including this guidance are available at the CORE Organic II website: <u>www.coreorganic2.org</u>. The pre-proposal application has to be filled in and submitted via the call submission website <u>http://eracall.eu/coreorganic.</u> **Pre-proposals must be submitted by 15 October 2010, 13.00 CET**.

Each consortium must designate a project coordinator, who will have a specific role during the submission process and afterwards, if the project is funded (see 6.1).

For each application, two pre-proposal forms have to be filled in: 1) Part A is web-based and has to be filled in directly on the call submission website, and 2) Part B, a project description form, has to be downloaded fromand uploaded to the call submission website. Only one application is required covering all the project partners of the consortium. The application should be submitted by the project coordinator on behalf of the consortium. It is mandatory to submit the Part B form as an **unprotected** Adobe PDF file. Pre-proposals must be written in English and they should be precise and concise.

Application submission will only be accepted via the CORE Organic II call submission website: <u>http://eracall.eu/coreorganic.</u>

For further information contact the Call Secretariat (chapter 5).

6.1 THE PROJECT COORDINATOR

Each Project Consortium needs to appoint a project coordinator, who, in any commissioned project, shall have the following role and responsibilities:

- Be the single point of contact between the CORE Organic II Consortium and the researchers on behalf of the consortium from the submission of the proposal until to the submission of the final reports.
- Submit the application on behalf of the Project Consortium.
- Compile and submit reports and other deliverables to the CORE Organic II Consortium on behalf of the Project Consortium.
- Secure that all project milestones and deliverables are met and take action according to the project management plan if one or more partners fail to deliver.
- Inform the CORE Organic II Consortium about any event that might affect the implementation of the project.

The project coordinator will NOT be responsible for the financial management of CORE Organic II project funding, which will be handled directly between the national research institutions and their national funding bodies in each participating country.



6.2 PRE-PROPOSAL APPLICATION

Applicants will be required to submit a pre-proposal consisting of the following informations:

Part A, predefined boxes on the call website:

- 1. Title of Project (max. 200 characters).
- 2. Project Acronym (max. 20 characters).
- 3. Thematic research area (1) Cropping, 2) Monogastric or 3) Quality).
- 4. Project Summary (2000 characters).
- 5. Keywords (max 5 and 100 characters).
- 6. Duration of the proposed research project (max 36 months).
- 7. References of ten selected publications (per consortium) by the partners and relevant to the proposal, including links to the articles and abstracts.

Information about the coordinator and the project partners including financial plan

- 8. Contact details for each project partner.
- 9. Description of project partners, their role in the project and related projects:
 - The role of each project partner the project.
 - A description of the partner.

For coordinator and work package leaders:

- A short description of ongoing projects related to the present topic indicating project name, funding source and amounts, and potential overlap or link with the current proposal.
- A brief CV.
- 10. A financial plan for each project partner.

Part B, word form from the call website to be submitted as PDF (maximum 4 pages in total):

- 1. Proposal identification number (will be shown when you log-in)
- 2. Project title.
- 3. Project acronym.
- 4. Project objectives and main hypothesis.
- 5. Description of the:
 - Relevance of the proposal compared with the call text.
 - The degree to which the project will overcome/support important barriers/development opportunities for the organic sector.
 - Main results for the sector that can be expected.
 - Main target groups and how these will be involved and/or targeted in the project.
 - A clear description of the European added value of the project being carried out transnationally.
- 6. Description of the scientific methods and work plan (may be divided into work packages).

The maximum text indicated in each Part should be respected and the following format should be used: Arial, 10 pt, single space, 2.5 cm left/right margins, 3.5 cm top margin, 2 cm bottom margin.

Part A can be saved at all steps and revisions of Part B can be submitted until the deadline. The latest version will be shown at the next log-in. On 15 October at 13.00 CET the latest version is considered to be your final preproposal.

The information given in the pre-proposal is binding. Thus, any fundamental changes between the pre- and fullproposals, e.g. composition of the consortium, objectives of the project, or budget must be communicated to the Call Secretariat with detailed justification and will only be allowed under exceptional circumstances by the CORE Organic II Governing Board members of the involved countries.



Pre-proposals that are not complete, or which do not observe other formal requirement will not be considered for evaluation.

7 EVALUATION OF PRE-PROPOSALS

7.1 ETHICS

Work involving the use of animals or humans should be carried out under the appropriate authorisation taking into account local ethical requirements. Any proposal, which appears to the CORE Organic II Governing Board to contravene fundamental ethical principles, shall not be selected, and may be excluded from the evaluation and selection procedure at any time. Judgement of the significance of ethical issues will be made by the Governing Board using the criteria published by the Commission in its guidelines for the Seventh Framework Programme (http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/index.cfm?fuseaction=public.topic&id=370).

7.2 ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

For the pre-proposal there are two sets of eligibility criteria in the selection process: CORE Organic II eligibility criteria and national eligibility criteria.

Core Organic II Eligibility Criteria

Each project pre-proposal must:

- ✓ Consist of a transnational consortium of at least three independent eligible legal entities from at least three of the Partner countries listed in Annex A and B.
- ✓ Be written in English.
- ✓ Use the application forms provided via the call website: <u>http://eracall.eu/coreorganic</u>.
- ✓ Fulfil the formal requirements for proposal submission.
- ✓ Be submitted correctly and completely via the call website before the call deadline (15 October 2010, 13.00 CET).
- ✓ Be of relevance compared to the thematic research areas of the call.
- ✓ Not include costs for the individual project partner that exceeds the indicative amounts allocated by their respective national funding body (Annex B).

National Eligibility Criteria

All partners involved in an application should check the National requirements in terms of eligible costs, subcontracting, etc. which must be in line with the respective national regulations. In case of doubts, please contact the National Contact Point (see Annex A).

7.3 SELECTION OF PRE-PROPOSALS

All pre-proposals submitted will be treated confidentially by the CORE Organic II Consortium. Limited feedback will be given to unsuccessful applicants by their National Contact Points.

In the selection process at the pre-proposal stage the transnational research proposals which are eligible in terms of the CORE Organic II criteria agreed between the funding bodies as well as meeting national regulations will be identified. Meeting these criteria is mandatory and proposals that do not meet them will not be considered for funding.

Further to the eligibility criteria the pre-proposals will be assessed on the following:



- Relevance of the proposal compared with the call text.
- The degree to which the project will overcome/support important barriers/development opportunities for the organic sector.
- Main results for the sector that can be expected.
- Main target groups and how these will be involved and/or targeted in the project.
- A clear description of the European added value of the project being carried out transnationally.
- A preliminary assessment of the quality of the consortium and geographical coverage of the partnerships compared with the topic.
- The innovative approach and the scientific quality compared with the budget.

Project Consortium whose pre-proposals meet the eligibility criteria and are assessed to be of high quality on the above mentioned criteria will be invited to submit a full-proposal.

8 FURTHER INFORMATION

8.1 SUBMISSION OF FULL-PROPOSALS

An updated guideline for the submission of full-proposals will be available with the invitations for full-proposals.

8.2 CONTRACT CONDITIONS

8.2.1 Terms of participation

The national funding of the CORE Organic II Calls are offered under the coordination of the FP7 ERA-NET CORE Organic II "Coordination of European Transnational Research in Organic Food and Farming Systems". Partners of the research project consortium are required to recognize the coordinating role of CORE Organic II throughout the duration of the funded research projects until the approval of the final report. The Project Consortium will be asked for feedback on the processes in order to help to refine these for future use.

8.2.2 Contractual relationships

Regarding the call and the funding, CORE Organic II is a collaboration between national funding bodies with the aim of establishing transnational research collaboration. The contracts with researchers and funding procedures and regulations remain the full responsibility of the national funding bodies.

Each project includes several consortium members called Project Partners, one of which is also the Project Coordinator.

Because of the fragmented nature of the funding care will be taken to ensuring that the individual contracts are synchronised both in time and content, so that the Project Consortium can deliver transnational outputs as described in the project proposal. The national funding bodies have to ensure that common CORE Organic II conditions are met (e.g. common commencement date of a given project, reporting requirements etc.).

Moreover, mechanisms and procedures will be established to assist the project coordinator in fulfilling his/her obligations.



8.2.3 Funding contracts

For the whole duration of the contract it is the responsibility of the Project Coordinator to inform the CORE Organic II Consortium of any changes which may affect the implementation of the project (e.g. work plan, consortium modifications) and other changes such as changes in the contract details.

Any financial issue is under the responsibility of each national funding body involved in the approved project.

If a change to the Project Consortium occurs which poses a risk to the project, the issue has to be solved by the consortium (in line with the Consortium Agreement). The CORE Organic II Consortium must be kept informed of such events.

Changes in the work plan should be only minor, but will need to be authorised by the CORE Organic II Consortium.

8.2.4 Consortium Agreement

The consortia selected for funding must enter into a Consortium Agreement, in order to manage the project activities, finances, intellectual property rights (IPR) and to avoid disputes which might be detrimental to the completion of the project.

It will be the responsibility of the project coordinators to draw up a Consortium Agreement suitable to their own group. The Consortium Agreement will normally be under the law and legal system of the country of the project coordinator. The purpose of this document is:

- To underpin the project partners' collaboration and provide the project partners with mutual assurance on project management structures and procedures, and their rights and obligations towards one another.
- To assure the funding bodies involved that the Project Consortium has a satisfactory decision making capacity and is able to work together in a synergistic and positive manner.

The following items (as a minimum) should be addressed by the Consortium Agreement:

- Purpose of and definitions used in the Consortium Agreement.
- Names of the organizations involved.
- Organization and management of the project.
- Role and responsibilities of the project coordinator and the project Partners: person in charge, their obligations and key tasks, conditions for their change and mechanisms for solving disagreements and in case of non-compliance.
- Deliverables where coordination is required (reports based on collaboration between project partners and, if relevant, specific requirements for national reports).
- Confidentiality and publishing.
- Intellectual property rights (how this issue will be handled between research partners).
- Decision making procedures within the consortium.
- Handling of internal disputes.
- Liabilities of the research partners towards one another (including the handling of default of contract).

The Consortium Agreement must be signed by all partners of the Project Consortium.

8.2.5 Intellectual Property Rights and use and access to results

Results and new Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) resulting from projects funded through the CORE Organic II Call will be owned by the Project Partners according to the conditions stated in their Consortium Agreement and



shall not be in conflict with the respective national regulation.

Researchers are encouraged to actively exploit the results of the research project and make them available for use, whether for commercial gain or not, in order for public benefit to be obtained from the knowledge created.

8.2.6 Commencement of projects

A project can commence as soon as the Call Secretariat has been informed by all funding partners about the conclusion of the national contracts. Once the national contracts come into force, eligible national costs may be claimed as per national procedures. In the interim period, researchers may commence work on the project at their own risk and costs.

8.2.7 Project reporting

Generally, a mid-term and a final scientific report containing deliverables have to be sent to the CORE Organic II Consortium by the project coordinator. The reports will be sent to the relevant national funding bodies for evaluation, and they may or may not use experts for this evaluation. Project reports and the progress will be assessed against the expected output and timeline and described in the final project description (milestones and deliverables) and action may be taken by funding bodies in case of problems or non-compliance.

In addition, short project updates suitable for immediate publication should be provided annually to the CORE Organic II Consortium.

Project reports must be produced in English, and supplementary versions may also be produced in other languages at the Project Partners' discretion and own cost.

Where required, each partner must report progress on its own component of the work to the national funding bodies in line with national contractual obligations. This also applies to financial reports.

8.2.8 Dissemination requirements

Dissemination of project results is requested in the form of various communication routes such as scientific papers, posters, stakeholder involvement, course or training material, web based tools, workshops or direct intervension to wards end users. A dissemination plan should specify the planned dissemination activities.

All publications, which wholly or partly build on the CORE Organic II projects, should be made searchable through the electronic archive, Organic Eprints (<u>www.orgprints.org</u>).

The Project Partners shall acknowledge the trans-national funding of the CORE Organic II ERA-NET and the individual national funding bodies in any documents that is published (in written, oral or electronic form) within the research project.



ANNEX A – NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS

Country	Name & Organisation	Telephone	E-mail	
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ANNEX B – FUNDER CONTRIBUTION TABLE

Country	Cropping	Monogastric	Quality	Total per country
Austria	0.1	0.1	-	0.2
Belgium (Flanders)	0.1	0.1	-	0.2
Czech Republic	0.03	0.03	0.01*	0.06
Denmark	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.2
Estonia	0.09	-	-	0.09
Finland	0.075	0.05	0.075	0.2
France	0.15	0.075	0.075	0.3
Germany	0.5	0.3	0.2	1.0
Ireland	0.03	-	-	0.03
Italy	0.55	0.3	0.35	1.2
Latvia	0.02	-	-	0.02
Lithuania	-	-	0.1	0.1
Luxembourg	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4
Netherlands	0.15	0.2	-	0.35
Norway	0.4	-	0.2	0.6
Slovenia	0.1	-	0.05	0.15
Spain	0.2	-	-	0.2
Sweden	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.75
Switzerland	0.15	0.125	0.125	0.4
Turkey	0.07	-	0.03	0.1
UK	0.239	0.119	-	0.358
Total million euros	3.704	1.780	1.815	7.918

CORE Organic II, first call. Indicative funding per country and thematic research area (in Million €)

*Please note that the 0.01 Million € has been added by the Czech Republic after the pre-announcement

