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Fostering Innovative Research in SMEs and Training the Next Generation of Research Entrepreneurs

Transferring cutting-edge Science and Technology from **creative Academic** groups to SMEs is a key element for **successful business**. Well trained, **entrepreneurial-minded** and mobile researchers are key to this successful collaboration. This is why the two Marie Curie actions (IAPP and ITN) are **promoting SME-Academic collaborations** focusing on giving researchers the adequate skills and opportunities to contribute to SME growth.

Industry Academia Partnership and Pathways (IAPP) and Initial Training Networks (ITN):

- **promote S&T transfer and create a win-win situation for SMEs and academic groups;**
- **fund recruitment of staff, networking activities, and research costs.**

Industry and Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP)

IAPP are partnerships between public and private research organisations based on a common research project and aim to increase the exchange of skills between the two sectors.

A consortium comprises at least one research organisation from the public sector and one from the private sector. Participating organisations must be from at least two different Member States or Associated Countries.

Funding covers:

- exchange of know-how and experience between private sector and academia through secondments of research staff of the participants;
- recruitment of experienced staff from outside the partnership, for facilitating the transfer of knowledge and/or the training of staff;
- networking activities, organisation of workshops and conferences, involving the participants' own research staff and external researchers;
- research equipment funding for SMEs with up to 10% of the EU contribution for each SME participant.

Which research topics are supported?

Proposals from all areas of scientific and technological research are welcome.



How does it work?

Once your proposal has been submitted, it is evaluated against a series of predetermined criteria by international peer review and may be selected for funding for three to four years. These criteria can be seen on the following website:

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/people/industry-academia_en.html

Initial Training Networks (ITN)

ITN are networks of academic and private research organisations which collaborate to train researchers in order to improve their research and entrepreneurial skills, help them join established research teams, and enhance their career prospects in both the public and private sectors.

A network typically comprises at least three participants proposing a coherent research training programme.

Funding covers:

- recruitment of researchers (in the first five years of their careers) for initial training;
- recruitment of experienced researchers of outstanding stature in international training and collaborative research to strengthen transfer of knowledge;
- networking activities, organisation of workshops and conferences, involving the participants' own research staff and external researchers.

Which research topics are supported?

Proposals from all areas of scientific and technological research are welcome.

How does it work?

Once your proposal has been submitted, it is evaluated against a series of predetermined criteria by international peer review and may be selected for funding over three to four years. These criteria can be seen at the following website.

http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/people/initial-training_en.html



Shellfish Collaboration is a Pearl

Sales of shellfish are enjoying a boom, thanks mainly to their healthy image. However, inconsistency in the quantity and quality of the wild seed supply is causing headaches for processors, who are faced with a raw material of variable quality.

To counter this, the Marie Curie IAPP is funding a Research Fellow from Norway to develop genetic selection techniques for a specifically designed breeding programme. This will allow the industry to base its business on the most suitable, profitable shellfish. Scallops with an improved growth and survival rate will have a significant impact on the profitability and further expansion of the sector. According to Julie Maguire, coordinator of the BIFF project, 'The IAPP scheme has been well worth it and we feel that the Commission is there to help us.'

Paybacks for the Irish partners, Fastnet Mussels and Daithi O'Murchu Marine Research Station, include new skills in designing genetic breeding programmes, whereas their Norwegian counterparts will gain experience in raising shellfish. SMEs involved will clearly benefit from an improved understanding of analytical techniques and ethical issues, while academics will gain greater insight into the needs of the industry and the market.

What about plans for the future? Julie Maguire states, 'We will definitely want to continue working together and are now looking for new opportunities; in the future we may diversify into another species, such as abalone.'



Arild Linsett and Yoav Barr, scientists

EC financial contribution: € 579 086
Project duration: December 2006 – December 2010

Coordinator:

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Academy Award-Winning Partnership Joins Marie Curie

Thanks to EC funding, a London-based SME developing special effects for Hollywood blockbusters and scientists in the Republic of Ireland are collaborating on cutting-edge research. The Marie-Curie IAPP helped bring together an industrial partner, The Foundry, specialising in the development of film post-production software, and an academic partner, Trinity College Dublin (TCD) Sigmedia Group, experts in video processing and content-based access.

The two organisations have been successfully cooperating for several years and have already won acclaim for their work, including the highly coveted Scientific and Engineering Award from the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts, and Sciences. Bill Collis coordinator of the AXIOM project claims, 'The Marie Curie IAPP is an excellent way of continuing to develop our relationship with Trinity College and the Commission has been very approachable and helpful.'

A Research Fellow from Trinity College will gain valuable commercial experience in the post-production industry and exposure to many of the Foundry's customers. The Foundry has sent staff to Dublin to study the latest research in 3D image processing. Bill Collis concludes that 'the Marie Curie IAPP exchange has been a great success, collaborating on cutting-edge research that will help the business to grow'.



Benjamin Kent



Bill Collis

EC financial

contribution: € 241 403

Project duration: January 2006 – January 2009

Coordinator:

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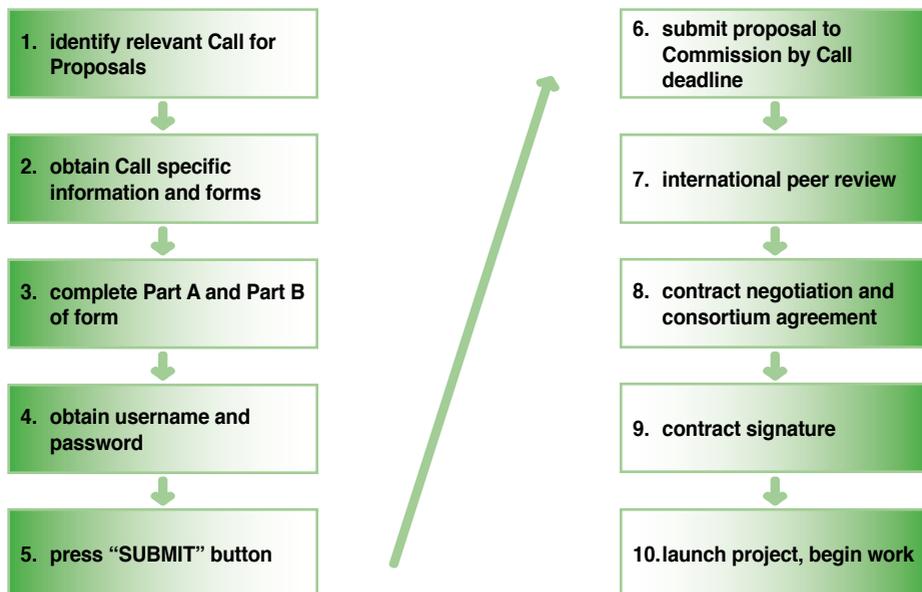
E-mail: bill@thefoundry.co.uk

Website: <http://thefoundry.co.uk>





How to apply for the IAPP and ITN



Step 1. Identify relevant Calls for Proposals - Calls for Proposals for this action are announced on the CORDIS website: http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/people/home_en.html

Step 2. Obtain Call specific information and forms - The submission of the proposal is carried out online. If you are unable to submit your proposal in this way, please contact the Commission. Those interested in participating must use the Electronic Proposal Submission Service (EPSS).

Step 3. Complete Part A and Part B of form - Proposal submission forms include Part A and Part B. Part A comprises a pre-prepared form concerned with administration information regarding the proposal and proposers, and general budget information. Part B addresses the evaluation criteria, and comprises a description of the research project and a series of heading and explanatory notes based on the evaluations criteria.

In order for your proposal to be considered eligible it must involve the minimum number of participants stipulated in the Call text.



Step 4. Obtain username and password - The project coordinator completes the proposal application by obtaining a username and password, coordinating the completion of Part A of the form for each participant and coordinating the drafting of Part B of the form.

Step 5. Press submit button - Last but not least, the coordinator must press the “SUBMIT” button, so that the form is valid.

Step 6. Submit proposal to Commission by Call deadline - The coordinator must prepare the application online before the deadline date. Submissions received by the Commission after the deadline are ineligible.

Step 7. International peer review - The evaluation of the proposals is carried out by the Commission with the help of independent experts. They are independent, impartial and objective, and possess the appropriate language skills required. The coordinator must bear in mind that the Commission is looking for a project that matches their objectives. The criteria against which the proposal will be evaluated include:

- its scientific and/or technological excellence;
- its relevance to the objectives of the specific programme;
- its potential impact through the development, and dissemination and correct use of project results;
- the quality and efficiency of the proposed project’s implementation and management.

Step 8. Contract agreement and consortium agreement - The terms and conditions regulating European projects are contained in two documents, the ‘Grant Agreement’ between the consortium and the European Commission and the Consortium Agreement signed only by the partners.

The Consortium Agreement includes the arrangements made for Intellectual Property Rights, valorisation and the dissemination of results.

Step 9. Contract Signature

Step 10. Launch project, begin work!



Celtic Catalysts Contribute to Celtic Tiger

'The Marie Curie IAPP helps academics understand what industry really needs and by linking science and innovation, researchers will better appreciate the exploitation potential of their work,' says NOVOCAT project co-ordinator Brian Kelly. The project focuses on the transfer and integration of distinct, but highly complementary, areas of research competence in an SME and an academic institute. The expertise of renowned Queen's University, Belfast, is in the field of biological catalysts, whereas the expertise of successful biotech SME Celtic Catalysts lies in the area of chemical catalysts.

Building a long-term strategic partnership enhances the SME's core discovery platform and increases its competitiveness. In turn, academic researchers learn how to work in a commercial environment and acquire an understanding of the market.

The project also allows researchers from new Member States to obtain wider experience beyond purely scientific expertise. NOVOCAT has recruited three scientists from across Europe, who will work for 18 months at Queen's University in Belfast, Northern Ireland before spending a further 18 months in an industrial environment at Celtic Catalysts in Dublin, in the Republic of Ireland. Coordinator Brian Kelly underlines, 'We will continue the partnership after the Marie Curie IAPP finishes, and we would definitely recommend it to other SMEs.'



EC financial contribution: € 560 385
Project duration: 27 months

Coordinator :

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Fuels Cells in Turkey Face Bright Future through Marie Curie IAPP

Hi-tech SME, Adelan Ltd's, cutting-edge environmental technology is helping to bring clean energy to communities that have no direct access to electricity mains. Their project, developed in Turkey, was designed to engage the country's existing expertise in mass manufacturing and to fulfil the long-term prospects of a global fuel cell market, which, according to coordinator Michaela Kendall, is estimated to be worth hundreds of billions of dollars by 2020. Adelan is working alongside the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) on a Marie Curie IAPP funded project that aims to utilise biogas from agricultural waste to power solid oxide fuel cells (SOFCs).

By collaborating with TUBITAK, this SME has been able to identify project partners including Uludag University, achieve a better understanding of the market dynamics of a rapidly developing country, and observe business opportunities first hand. A Fuel Cell cluster has been developed in the city of Bursa which will support national and international fuel cell initiatives. Founded in 1996, Adelan is a small solid fuel cell (SOFC) spinout company resulting from materials research carried out at Birmingham and Keele Universities in the UK. Adelan first developed the micro tubular SOFC which is now being used throughout the world to generate clean energy from hydrogen and hydrocarbon gas.

Project coordinator Michaela Kendall concludes, 'At present, SOFCs tend to be handmade and therefore expensive. We need to develop manufacturing expertise for the long term. With the help of the Marie Curie IAPP we can link the manufacturing expertise of Turkey with EU fuel cell innovations and establish a lasting collaboration in fuel cell manufacture.'



EC financial contribution: € 218 667
Project duration: 24 months

Coordinator:

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Useful Links

Marie Curie Actions

<http://ec.europa.eu/mariecurieactions/>

SME Techweb

http://ec.europa.eu/research/sme-techweb/index_en.cfm

The Commission's FP7 Enquiry Service

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

IPR Helpdesk

<http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org/>

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