

From FP5 to FP6

European Commission, Directorate General "Preserving the Ecosystem – Research into Energy Efficiency" Division "Nuclear Fission and Radiation Protection"

The date of 6 May, 2003 will be memorable for those who have been actively preparing proposals in response to the first calls for proposals in FP6 – in particular those using the new instruments where the scale and ambition required of the proposals has brought many new challenges and demands. The deadline for the first calls has now passed and the evaluation process is underway. The main outcomes of the evaluation should be known in August and contractual negotiations will follow. Projects are expected to begin in late 2003 or early 2004.

Proposal evaluation and contract negotiation will be the main focus for Commission staff for the remainder of the year. A further important activity is the preparation of the work programme for 2004, for which calls for proposals will be issued later this year with a deadline for their receipt in the spring of 2004. The 2004 work programme will largely focus on those topics or areas that were not included in the first calls – epidemiological studies, radioecology, natural sources of radiation, risk management and protection in the workplace. Topics included in the first calls may also be included, in particular if the scope or quality of proposals received following the first calls prove to be insufficient. Indications of the possible scope and content of the areas for inclusion in 2004 were given in the initial work programme; these are currently under review in consultation with other Commission Directorate Generals, our Advisory Committees and with the research community.

The views of the research community on the 2004 work programme have been solicited in various fora. The most important and extensive inputs have been obtained from a number of co-ordination meetings organised by the Commission Services on epidemiology, radioecology and protection in the workplace/dosimetry. These meetings had a dual purpose: firstly, to review progress with ongoing FP5 projects and promote enhanced collaboration between projects; and, secondly, to discuss and identify future research needs and priorities. Participation in the meetings was fully open but largely comprised existing or past contractors in the EURATOM research programme. These meetings helped clarify and/or reinforce earlier judgements as to where Community resources could be best directed to contribute to the main goals of FP6 – in particular, the establishment of the European Research Area and addressing problems whose scale and nature require the mobilisation of resources on a European scale for their resolution. Summaries of these meetings, including needs identified by the research community, can be found on the EURATOM web site: www.cordis.lu/fp6-euratom/

While attention increasingly shifts to FP6, both in the Commission and in the research community, FP5 must not be neglected. A large number of

projects are still ongoing and some will only come to completion after a few years. It is critical, for all concerned, for these projects to be brought to successful conclusion and their outcomes effectively exploited and disseminated. More attention needs to be given to exploitation and dissemination by the research community; these aspects will, in future, be given greater attention by Commission staff in their monitoring and follow up of projects.