

# EURON Third Call for Proposals

## Deadline 15 April 2006 @ 12.00 MET

### 1 Introduction

Under the European Research Network – EURON contract (FP6-NOE-507728), sponsored by the CEC-IST Future and Emerging Technologies unit, a call for proposals is hereby issued.

As part of its research coordination the network invites applications for support in terms of:

- Prospective Research Projects (PRP)
- Research Ateliers (RA) and
- Special Interest Groups (SIG)

In short the respective categories are:

- A PRP is a small research project
- A RA is a work meeting to study a specific topic
- A SIG is a micro community formed to address a specific topic

Below a more detailed explanation is provided. In addition details on the different types of projects can be found in the annex of work for EURON (the annex 1 to the contract).

Projects must have a clear value to the “Beyond Robotics” programme (see <http://www.cordis.lu/ist/fet/ro-wg.htm>) and, as such, be related to one of the focal areas of:

- Hybrid bionic systems
- Cognitive Companion
- Robot ecologies

The proposed projects either augment work already done within existing IPs, or explore entirely new approaches. Projects can be cross-cutting.

### 2 Prospective Research Projects

#### 2.1 What is a prospective research project?

A Prospective Research Project is primarily intended for early evaluation of novel research ideas. Projects are expected to provide support to research within the subject area of the *Beyond Robotics* initiative and to be of an exploratory nature, and to be designed to test rapidly the credibility of new research ideas and concepts. PRPs are targeted research projects with a maximum duration of 12 months (extensions will in general not be permitted). The expected output of the project must be clearly identified.

#### 2.2 Who can apply?

Project must as a minimum include 2 member institutions from two different EU countries (or affiliated states)

As a special feature, this call is directed at young researchers (within 5 years of earning a PhD). Each partner, whether industrial or academic, must satisfy this criteria. For an industrial partner without a PhD, and age limit of 30 years will apply. The idea is to have young researchers apply for projects to allow them to setup international cooperative projects early in their career.

The maximum budget for a PRP is 100 K Euro.

## 2.3 Other information

The format of proposals and the guidelines for submission are presented in Section 5 and 8.

It is expected that the present call will allow funding of 3-4 PRP projects.

## 3 Research Ateliers

### 3.1 What is a Research Atelier?

A Research Atelier is a focussed effort on a well-defined question taking place at a single venue, with participation of researchers from a number of different institutions and/or companies over a limited period of time. The duration of an atelier can be from a few days to a month. The aim of an atelier is cross-institution and/or cross-discipline integration.

### 3.2 Example Research Ateliers

The result of an atelier can be a roadmap or a focussed study of a particular topic resulting in a publication.

As there is a strong need to enrich the EURON research roadmap we encourage the setup of ateliers to address the topical focal points identified in the EURON roadmap i.e.

- Advanced Production Assistant
- Adaptive Robot Assistant
- Networked Robotics
- Field Robotics
- Health Care / BioMedical

In this areas development of a detailed roadmap through focussed topical meetings would be most welcome

### 3.3 Composition of a Research Atelier

A Research Atelier must be organised by at least two EURON member institutions, from two different member states. The consortium of participants can be as large as needed. It is important to recognize that people from outside the EU can be involved as needed to ensure a global view of the topic studied by an atelier.

The consortium must appoint an atelier coordinator that is responsible for all communication with the EURON administration.

### 3.4 Other Information

The format of proposals and the guidelines for submission are presented in Section 5 and 8.

It is expected that at most three research atelier can be sponsored at a level of 100 KEuro each as part of this call.

## 4 Special Interest Groups

### 4.1 What is a *Special Interest Group* (SIG)?

A SIG is an *ad hoc* collection of five or more EURON institutions that come together to form a micro community to address a specific topic that is of common interest to all SIG members. The initiative to form a SIG lies completely with the members, and they are free to select the topic of their SIG.

## 4.2 Example SIG activities

A (non-exhaustive) list of activities that a SIG may want to pursue:

- **Documents** of general interest: a whitepaper, a topical roadmap, a survey,...
- **Design** of a new piece of hardware or software, suggestions for standardization, best experimental practices, benchmarks, “Grand Challenges” in the SIG’s domain, ...
- **Web repository**, collecting relevant information for the SIG’s domain: experimental data sets, software modules and programming interfaces, textbook material, ...

## 4.3 Who can apply?

- **All researchers in EURON**, members of the EURON Board cannot act as SIG coordinators.
- **At least five** institutions must be involved, and they must be members of EURON from **at least two** member states.

## 4.4 Contents of a SIG proposal

### 4.4.1 Objectives of the SIG

- How does the SIG improve the **State of “best practices”** in its domain?
- How does the SIG stimulate **new researchers** to become active within EURON?
- How does the SIG support the ongoing **Euron activities**:
  - **Research planning**: additions to EURON’s *Roadmap*, preparation of FP7 efforts, ...
  - **Education & Training**: development of courses or educational material; development of an educational robotics platform that can travel around secondary schools in Europe; development of an educational package for teachers; ...
  - **Industry transfer**: standardize interfaces and data formats of current research software, in order to facilitate industrial acceptance; ...
  - **Dissemination**: writing popular science articles about EURON activities; ...

### 4.4.2 Institutions involved in the SIG

### 4.4.3 SIG Coordinator(s)

The person responsible for all communication with EURON.

### 4.4.4 List of planned activities

### 4.4.5 Budget

A SIG may be funded **at most 15.000 EURO** a year. The expected cost items must be identified and motivated in the Proposal. (Note: just asking for travel money without a realistic activity plan is not acceptable.). It is anticipated that 5-6 SIGs might be funded within the present call.

## 4.5 Other information

- A proven track record of SIG activity is not mandatory, but will be evaluated positively.
- The planning of SIG meetings in the context of already organized events (conferences, etc.), in order to reduce costs, is positively evaluated.
- The EURON Board installs a network wide **Coordinator for SIGs**, who can (if desired by the SIG) provide services with respect to organisation of SIG meetings, etc.

## 5 Proposal structure

A proposal must be prepared according to the recommended “proposal structure” (see separate document). Proposals that are too long will not be considered.

The structure is as follows:

- Front page with administrative data (1 page)
- General description of the proposal (max 2 pages)
- Workplan and timetable (max 1 page)
- Deliverables (max 0.5 page)
- Budget (not more than 1 page)
- Management of the project (max 0.5 page)
- Consortium (max 0.5 page/partner)

The core of the proposal is thus max 6.5 pages and then N x 0.5 pages for presentation of the consortium.

## 6 Evaluation Procedure

All proposals will be reviewed using a peer-review process as outlined below. Details can also be found in the EURON review guidelines (see separate document)

A list of received proposals with key data (proposer, institution, title of study, amount of resources requested) will be circulated to the EURON Board and the Commission. Any member of the Board having a potential conflict of interest must announce it to the co-ordinator within 1 week of the publication of the list.

Three international experts (the “Evaluators”) are selected for the evaluation of each proposal. The evaluators will be selected according to scientific qualifications to judge the proposal, but at the same time in a manner to ensure a balanced and fair evaluation.

The reviews are carried out under a confidentiality agreement with EURON.

Electronic copies are forwarded to the evaluators (within two weeks of the deadline of the call). Evaluations are to be completed within two weeks. Special evaluation forms are provided – they are adapted versions of the evaluation forms used by the CEC for STREPs. The evaluators will be asked to adhere to the guidelines for evaluation normally used by the CEC for STREPs, CAs and SSAs as appropriate. Copies of the guidelines will be forwarded to the evaluators together with the proposals. All evaluators will be required to sign a non-disclosure form and a non-conflict form to insure against publication of confidential information, and to avoid conflicts of interest.

The received evaluation forms will be collected and made available to the EURON Board and the Commission. An evaluation committee will provide a consolidation over the received reviews and prepare a recommendation to the Board.

The Network Board is expected to meet 5 weeks after the deadline of the call to make a final decision on the received proposals. An EU officer will be invited to the meeting as an observer. In the selection of the

proposals for support the Board will adhere to the guidelines for evaluation used by the CEC as applicable. For the discussion of each proposal, board members who have earlier notified a conflict of interest will be required to leave the room while the case is being discussed. Such members are *not* allowed to express any opinion about the proposal at any time during the meeting. Within one week of the board meeting, proposers receive a written decision regarding their proposal. The decision will include an evaluation decision and a summary of the evaluations received from the international evaluators. In addition, successful proposals will be advertised through the EURON WWW facility.

## **7 Contract preparation**

Funded projects will be set up as “direct contracts with third parties” (according to article 17 of the rules for participation) to execute a small project or a special study under the auspices of EURON.

The EURON co-ordinator concludes a written agreement with the project consortium. This agreement determines the conditions for implementing the project and the respective rights and obligations of EURON and the project consortium. The agreement has to be in conformity with the EURON contract. Activities are expected to start by July 1, 2006.

## **8 Submission of proposals**

In general to be eligible for support independent legal entities from at least two EU member states or associated states must be involved in the effort. These partners are jointly liable, technically and financially to execute the project or study and to deliver its results. The eligibility of a legal entity to participate and receive funding complies with the general principles laid down in the Articles 4 - 8 of the Rules of Participation in EU projects. Participants are expected to be/become members of EURON.

Proposals must be received in hard-copy (and electronically - PDF format - on a standard ISO9660 CDROM) by the closing date (12:00 noon (MET) 15 April 2006). An ASCII version of a proposal abstract (1/2 page) is to be included on the CDROM. Proposals received too late will be returned unopened. Inappropriately formatted or partial proposals will be disregarded. Proposals submitted by fax or email will not be considered.

Proposals are to be submitted to

EURON Call for Proposals  
C/O Centre for Autonomous Systems, NADA  
School of Computer Science and Communication  
Kungliga Tekniska Hogskolan  
Teknikringen 14  
SE-114 28 Stockholm, Sweden

A notification of receipt will be returned to the proposers within one week of arrival (by fax)

## **9 Documents:**

- EURON Workplan (general information on EURON and scope of projects)
- Evaluation Guidelines for Projects
- Structure of a proposal
- Model Contract

General information about EURON and the above mentioned documents can be obtained from the network web facility (<http://www.euron.org>)