



European Technology Platform

“Plants for the Future”

INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO A SURVEY OF FUTURE PLANT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE



ANNOUNCEMENT

Academic and industrial scientists in Europe are invited to contribute to a survey of current and possible future trans-national collaborative research activities in Europe relevant to plant science. The results of this survey will help the EC formulate Work Programmes for the first two calls in FP7 (2007, 2008) and help the ERA-PG national funding agencies to identify new areas for possible trans-national funding. Therefore YOUR contributions to this survey will be very important for gaining more support for plant research in Europe.

The survey is conducted by EPSO for the European Technology Platform "Plants for the Future".

Launch 24 May 2006 - Close 23 June 2006

All information at <http://bioinformatics.psb.ugent.be/FPRA/> (from 25th May on electronic submission forms at that site)

DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY

This invitation is extended to all scientists conducting plant research relevant to agriculture and forestry, food, feed and non-food products, energy and environment in Europe, including both academic and industrial scientists.

The scope of research for the survey is broad, from technology development, basic through applied plant research in molecular biology, biotechnology, genomics and bioinformatics through to population biology, ecology and environmental science. The outcome of the survey is of great importance for projecting the socio-economic relevance of plant research and the preparedness of plant scientists to conduct breakthrough research that will enhance the competitiveness of Europe. The Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) of the Technology Platform “Plants for the Future” has formulated a set of long-term objectives for European plant research that have recently been reviewed by national consultation (<http://www.epsoweb.org/Catalog/TP/docs/SRA-I.PDF>). Comparison of the feedback from this survey with the template provided by the SRA will allow areas of relative strength and weakness in European science to be identified. This information can be used to promote strategically important areas of research, and to encourage scientists to initiate new research programmes. In summary, the survey will provide a bottom-up input of plant scientists in European policy.

The survey will be conducted via a web-based interface hosted by the Flemish Institute of Biotechnology (VIB), BE <http://bioinformatics.psb.ugent.be/FPRA/>. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence such that ideas, concepts and partnerships will not be revealed. The inputs to the survey will be analyzed and collated by a small team of academic and industrial scientists with expertise in different fields of plant science, working under the auspices of EPSO. The composition of this team is shown below. This team's job is to collate the information provided and write a summary report evaluating the relevance of the research topics to the realization of the Strategic Research Agenda. This analysis will be made available to relevant European scientists, policy makers and the EC. It will be an important resource for the EC and national funding agencies to identify topics and budget estimates and for scientists to start to develop applications and establish research networks in preparation for FP7.

Timescale

The closing date for the survey is Friday June 23 2006. This date will allow the EC to incorporate the output of this survey into planning work packages for the first two calls into the FAB (Food, agriculture and biotechnology) programme during July. The results of the survey will be made available via the web portal and directly to contributors within 2-3 weeks after the closing date.

Requested information

- Title – 100 characters max.
- Summary of research project: 4-5 lines summarising the research.
- Rationale - why the research topic is important (max 200 words).
- Technical description of research plan (max 1 side A4).
- Expected impact and relevance to SRA and FP7 (max 200 words).
- Estimated budget (million €).
- 3 key references relevant to the research plan.
- Potential participants in network. Names, Institution and country
- Identify potential funding modality in FP7- collaborative research or networks of excellence (infrastructure, training). Tick-box.
- Indicate relevant research theme in the SRA – challenge I, II, III or IV. A brief description of these is shown below and the full documents can be seen at <http://www.epsoweb.org/Catalog/TP/docs/SRA-I.PDF> . OR please define a new research theme. Tick-box input plus free text section
- Indicate relevant FP7 Work Program sub-heading 1, 2, 3 in the Food, Agriculture and Biotechnology theme, or the themes Health, Energy and Environment. A description of these themes is provided. Tick-box input.

Input

Please tick a maximum of three boxes relevant to your research in each of the Foundations, Processes and Organisms headings. Please indicate any new topics in these two fields. Please refer to the SRA summary document (<http://www.epsoweb.org/Catalog/TP/docs/SRA-I.PDF>) to learn more about the future objectives in plant research, and to the EC FP7 work programme objectives that are described here, before you complete the survey. Here please tick only one box for the SRA and one for the FP7 Work Programme. Use the space for free text to concisely define any topics not covered by FP7 and the SRA.

Processing and Analysis

The panel will categorise research topics according to the field of research and collate the titles, summaries into generalized research topics. The relevance and impact of the research topics to the SRA and FP7 will be analysed according to the tick-boxes and text inputs, and a list of new topics established. A summary report of the analysis will be prepared showing the countries, the number of scientists involved in each research topic and the global requested funding. The summary report will also contain an evaluation of the relative strengths and weaknesses of European research activities in each topic and recommend an action plan to address this. Finally the global requested budgets for the different research fields will provide a sound basis for estimating the future funding requirements and for identifying novel funding schemes. The outputs of the survey will be placed on the web portal within 30 days of the closing date for the survey. These will also be sent to the Technology Platform "Plants for the Future", EC and ERA-PG national funding agencies. This analysis will also allow scientists to track decision-making by the EC, by seeing which areas of research appear in the Work Programme.

The Panel

The panel comprises experts from 4 groups of science chosen for their familiarity with the SRA, FP7 and science policy. Their job is to collate a report and not to judge or rank any aspect of the inputs to the survey. To achieve transparency the names of the panel are:

1. Food & Feed:

Vincent Petiard	Nestle, FR
Dick Toet	Unilever, NL
Peter Westhoff	Duesseldorf University, DE
Chris Bowler	IT & FR

2. Sustainable Agriculture:

Jean-Claude Guillon	Copa-cogeca, FR
Michel Caboche	INRA, FR
Uli Schurr	Phytosfere Juelich, DE
Maarten Koornneef	MPIZ Cologne, DE

3. Green Products :

Ralf-Michael Schmidt	BASF, DE
Diana Bowles	York Univ, UK
Kirsi-Marja Oksman-Caldentey	VTT Espoo, FI
Marc Cornelissen	Bayer, BE

4. Basic Research:

Marc Zabeau	VIB, BE
Chris Lamb / Mike Bevan	JIC, UK
Mark Stitt	MPIMP Golm, DE
Francesco Salamini	IT

The Helpline

For any questions you might have, please contact the Executive Assistant of the Technology Platform, Manuela Deckers: Tel. +32-9-331-3950, e-mail madec@psb.ugent.be .

The Future

If successful, the Technology Platform will consider conducting similar surveys for future input to research programs.