Europe-USA Call strengthening transnational research in the Molecular Plant Sciences

3rd ERA-CAPS Call for Proposals (2016)

Guidelines for Application
Full proposals

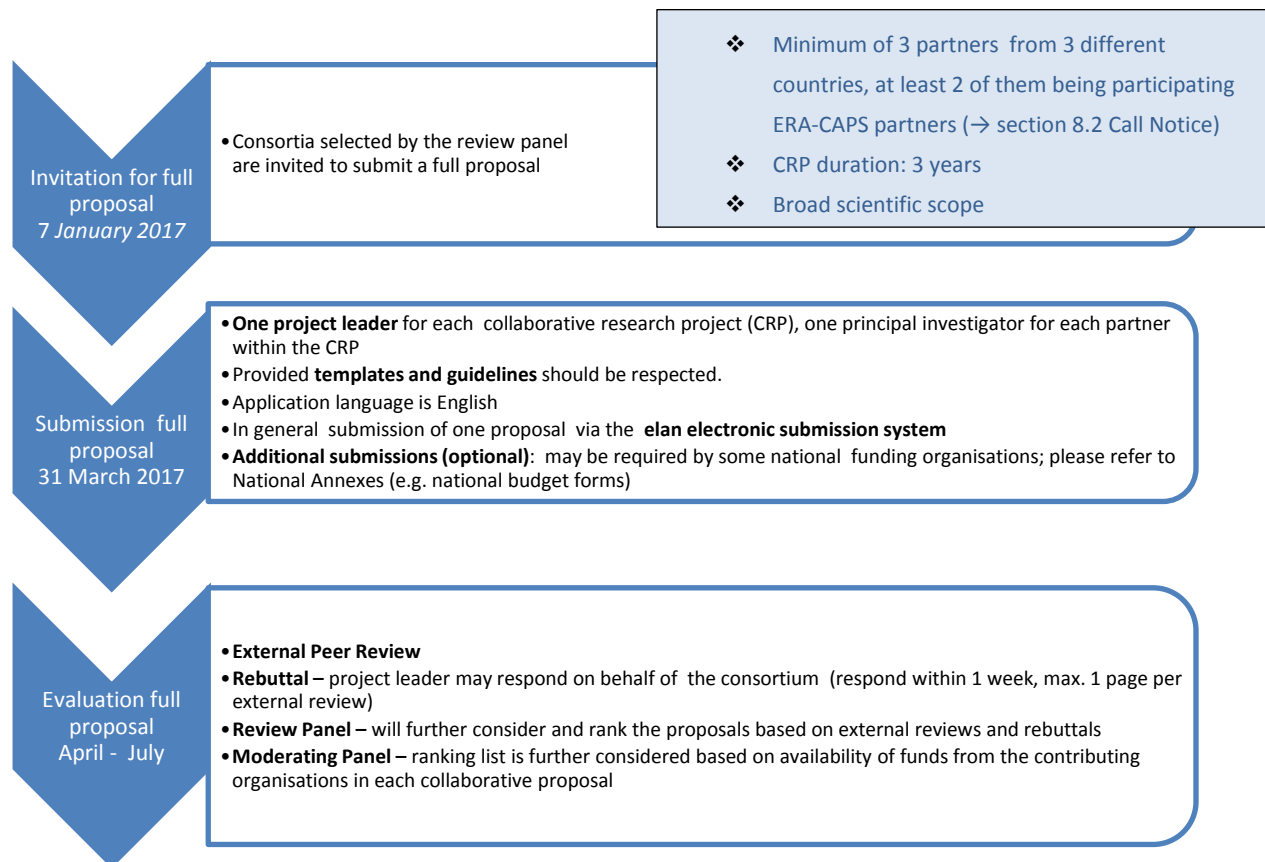**December 2016**

1. Introduction

These guidelines briefly explain how to apply for an ERA-CAPS grant. There is a two stage procedure for joint applications and accordingly, the proposal evaluation and selection will also follow a two stage procedure.

At the first stage, eligible **pre-proposals** were selected by a Review Panel based on the criteria that are published in the Call Notice. Selected consortia have been invited back for full proposal.

At the second stage, the **full proposals** will be subject to external peer review and the project leader will have the opportunity to comment on the external expert opinions (rebuttal step). The Review Panel will rank the proposals based on the peer review assessment. This ranked list will then be further considered by a Moderating Panel (comprising funding agency representatives) taking into account budgetary issues, leading to the final ranking list. This list will be forwarded to the national funding bodies, which will make the final funding decisions regarding their national applicants.

Proposals to both the ERA-CAPS main call and ERA-CAPS Sub-Call on data challenges in plant sciences will follow the same application procedure and the same peer review procedure.

The course of the application and evaluation procedure for the full proposal stage of the third ERA-CAPS call **"Europe-USA Call strengthening transnational research in the Molecular Plant Sciences"** is illustrated in Figure 1, including the timeline for submission, evaluation and national funding decisions.

Invitation for full proposal
7 January 2017

- Consortia selected by the review panel are invited to submit a full proposal

❖ Minimum of 3 partners from 3 different countries, at least 2 of them being participating ERA-CAPS partners (→ section 8.2 Call Notice)
❖ CRP duration: 3 years
❖ Broad scientific scope

Submission full proposal
31 March 2017

- **One project leader** for each collaborative research project (CRP), one principal investigator for each partner within the CRP
- Provided **templates and guidelines** should be respected.
- Application language is English
- In general submission of one proposal via the **elan electronic submission system**
- **Additional submissions (optional)**: may be required by some national funding organisations; please refer to National Annexes (e.g. national budget forms)

Evaluation full proposal
April - July

- **External Peer Review**
- **Rebuttal** – project leader may respond on behalf of the consortium (respond within 1 week, max. 1 page per external review)
- **Review Panel** – will further consider and rank the proposals based on external reviews and rebuttals
- **Moderating Panel** – ranking list is further considered based on availability of funds from the contributing organisations in each collaborative proposal

Final Funding Decision by National Authorities

Grant award letters (early 2018)

Figure 1: General workflow application- and evaluation-procedure of third ERA-CAPS call for both the main Call and the Data Challenges Sub-Call

For detailed guidance about the procedure, eligibility and evaluation criteria of this third ERA-CAPS call, applicants should refer to the corresponding Call Notice and National Annexes provided on the ERA-CAPS website: http://www.eracaps.org/era-caps-calls/era-caps-third-call.

All call procedures will be administered by the **Call Secretariat**, under strict confidentiality. Please contact the Secretariat with any questions regarding the organisation or administration of this call.

ERA-CAPS Call Secretariat:

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2. Proposal design and submission

General issues:

- Applicants should take note of individual regulations mentioned in the **National Annexes**, and should contact their National Call Coordinator for any queries related to these Annexes.

- Applicants should strictly follow the detailed instructions available in these *'Guidelines for Application'.* All proposals must be submitted to the ERA-CAPS Call secretariat through the electronic submission system elan.

- Templates for the Application form (Full proposal stage), CV, and Conflict of Interest list can be downloaded from the ERA-CAPS website (Third Call 2016).

- After successful submission, the main applicant will receive an electronic confirmation of receipt. The attached compliance form ("Confirmation Form") has to be originally signed by all applicants (scanned forms will be accepted from non-DFG applicants but no electronic signature) and sent to the ERA-CAPS Call Secretariat.

- In case your application would be declared ineligible you would receive feedback from respectively the Call Secretariat/National Call Coordinator.

- All applications must be written in English.

- The project leader, who is the primary contact person for the consortium should be listed as applicant 1. A principal investigator (PI) should be designated from each of the other collaborative institutions (named 'partner' in the *Applicant Form*) of the CRP (applicants 2, 3 etc.).

- **Incomplete proposals will not be processed**.

- **In this respect, please note that additional documents may be required by some funding agencies. Please refer to the national annexes for details.**

Submission procedure:

The **proposal** must be submitted to the electronic proposal submission system at: http://elan.dfg.de

The proposal documents must be provided as explained in the guidance below.

The closing date for submission of proposals is Friday, 31 March, 2017 – 12:00 pm CET.

For guidance how to use elan, please refer to the '***Elan Manual for the full proposal Submission'*** provided at http://www.eracaps.org/era-caps-calls/era-caps-third-call. Each consortium is requested to fill out an **electronically generated fact sheet** (**Electronic Proposal Form**). There is a partial redundancy with the **Application form** (to be uploaded in PDF format) in order to enable the Call Secretariat to

quickly process the applications for eligibility check and evaluation. The proposal documents must be provided as explained in the guidance below.

In order to submit a proposal to the elan system, applicants need an elan account. This refers to all PIs requesting funding. As the ERA-CAPS pre-proposals have already been submitted via elan, Project Leaders and PIs should have an elan account by now. In this case, please do not register again! However, you may want to double-check the entries for your account, in case any personal data have changed since the pre-proposal submission. Any new consortium member applying for funding should remember to register in elan at least 48 hours before the closing date of the call, if s/he does not yet have an elan account. To get to the elan submission system, please follow the link: https://elan.dfg.de/dana-na/auth/url_2/welcome.cgi

It is strongly recommended that applicants begin entering their details into the system well in advance of the call deadline. You will be able to save a draft version of your entry and continuously revise it before submission.

Please remember: The closing date for submission of proposals is **Friday, 31 March, 2017 – 12:00 pm CET**.

The elan application system and the relevant national systems will be open for ERA-CAPS applications as of Monday, 9 January, 2017.

Only proposals submitted to the elan system will be accepted. Proposals received by any other method will not be processed.

3. Guidance for the Application Form and enclosures

The **template** for the description of your scientific project is the *Application Form.* When writing the proposal, please follow the guidelines outlined for each item/ section in the *Application Form (Full proposals)* template.

For each collaborative research project (CRP), **one proposal** must be submitted, which consists in general of **two parts**:

(1) An **electronically generated fact sheet** (called **Electronic Proposal Form**) containing the project title, keywords, an English abstract of the proposal, the applicant details and requested funds.

(2) Several **attachments**, which must be uploaded as separate PDF files:

- The *Application Form,* where the scientific programme, project partners, costs, etc. of the CRP are detailed (see section 4).

- A document containing the merged **CVs** of each (co)applicant (one page per person) is required. This should include full contact details, current position, research interests, expertise and the five most relevant publications. (→ please use available template).

- A **Data Management Plan** following the guidelines in the ERA-CAPS Data Sharing Policy document.

- To avoid **conflicts of interest** when selecting the referees, you are requested to send an up-to-date list for each PI and Co-PI, naming all researchers with whom you have closely collaborated within the last four years (in general collaborations leading to joint publications, be it published, submitted and/or planned ones) in Excel format to ERA-CAPS.CallSecretariat@dfg.de. For US applicants, you must include your Ph.D. supervisor and your Ph.D. advisees as conflict of interests. Please also upload the updated list to elan at the full proposal submission. Please note that this information will not be forwarded to external reviewers or panel members.

OPTIONAL

- Suggestions for referees that you would prefer not to be asked for reviewing your proposal can be listed in the above-mentioned document as well. Please list names of referees that should be avoided for the assessment of your proposal and give a brief justification. This information will not be forwarded to external reviewers or panel members.

- Letters of support from industrial or non-funded collaborators may be submitted where appropriate.

(3) **"National submission"**: Several of the participating funding organisations require additional submission of partial project information to their national systems at the application stage, or at a later stage from successful applicants only. For details about what has to be submitted to which agency, please refer to the relevant *National Annexes* or contact the National Call Coordinator.

Documents other than those requested will not be forwarded to the external referees or the ERA-CAPS Review Panel.

4. Guidance for the Application Form

The *Application Form (Full proposals)* is the template containing the main part of the scientific proposal. When writing the **proposal,** please follow the guidelines outlined for each item/ section in the *Application Form* template.

- The proposal should comply with the following layout: margins minimal 2.5 cm, minimum font size Times New Roman 11 point, line spacing 15pt, 2pt spacing after paragraph.

- The different sections of the *Application Form* should not exceed the prescribed maximum number of A4 pages outlined in parenthesis.

- For a CRP of 3 partners, the project description (i.e. section 8 of the Application Form excluding the reference list (section 8.12.)) should not exceed twelve pages A4; for each additional partner (incl. self-funded partners) that joins the consortium an extra page will be allowed.

- The list of References including the full titles (section 8.12. - List of publications to which references are made in the project description) should not exceed two pages A4

- Appendices in excess of the allowable maximum number of pages providing extra figures and/or data will not be accepted.

*When uploading the documents, please use the following **document names**:*
'Application form_<your CRP Acronym>_ERA-CAPS.PDF'
'CVs_<your CRP Acronym>_ERA-CAPS.PDF'
'Data_Management_Plan_<your CRP Acronym>_ ERA-CAPS.PDF'
'COI_<your CRP Acronym>_ERA-CAPS.PDF'