

## The Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation (RPF)

The Research Promotion Foundation (RPF) was established by the Government of Cyprus in 1996, to serve as the national organization for the promotion of scientific and technological research in Cyprus. The Foundation is not a governmental institution but is governed by a 12-member Board, consisting of both members of the research community and policy makers, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Planning Bureau.

During the 2003-2005 period, the Foundation funded research projects with a total budget exceeding 40 million euros, while its own financial contribution was in the region of 28 million euros, thus, supporting more than 300 research projects and 100 additional research support actions.

Between October 2003 and November 2005 a total of 1153 research proposals were submitted to the Foundation. 52% of those were eligible for funding and 39% were actually financed because of budgetary limitations.

The Foundation launched funding Programmes covering various thematic areas, aiming at increasing the competitiveness of enterprises as well as strengthening research infrastructure and providing access to international research infrastructures.

Programmes were also initiated for developing the human potential in research. Such initiatives include Schemes addressed to young researchers and Cypriot expatriate scientists. These are particularly important because they will enable Cyprus to overcome the disadvantage of size and the consequent limited critical mass of researchers. Finally, it has developed, with considerable success, several measures for the promotion of research culture within all levels of the educational system.

Currently, the Foundation accounts for 12% of the total R&D funding in Cyprus. During the 2006-2008 period the funds that will be allocated for R&D through the Foundation's Programmes and activities are expected to more than double.

Non-Cypriots can also participate as partners in the Foundation's Programmes and receive funding. Proposals in some cases can be submitted in English and we are now in the process of extending this possibility.

The Foundation is constantly improving the rules and procedures of its funding Programmes and follows practices that are internationally adopted and accepted. Evaluation of submitted proposals is carried out outside Cyprus, by a panel of foreign experts to ensure objectivity. The outcome of the scientific evaluation of submitted research proposals clearly indicates a constant improvement.

Further to supporting research at national level, the RPF has developed several initiatives in order to promote the participation of Cypriot researchers in international research activities and encourage collaboration between Cypriot and international institutions. Specifically,

- The participation of Cyprus in FP5 and FP6 has been more than satisfactory. From December 2002 onwards out of the 576 proposals, which have been submitted with Cypriot participation, 127 have been approved for financing involving, 22,5 million euro. In the monitoring report of 2004 of the EC it is reported that Cyprus ranks first among the 25 EU members in the amount of funds secured per researcher. Out of these funds 34,7% were secured in the field of information technology, 23% in the human resources and mobility, 12,7% in sustainable development and climate change and 8,5% in SME' s participation.
- The COST Programme created many opportunities for networking. In 1999, Cyprus was represented in only 4 actions of the Programme, while until now Cyprus researchers have been participating in a total of 87 actions.
- The Programmes launched by the European Science Foundation (ESF) were instrumental in promoting the integration of Cypriot researchers in the European Research Area. Apart from participating in the ESF's "traditional" activities, the Foundation is currently supporting three 'a la carte' Scientific Programmes as well as five EUROCORES initiatives.
- The Membership of Cyprus in the EUREKA Initiative in 2002 and the launching of a "Eureka Cyprus" Specific Action, with a dedicated budget for the financing of industrial research projects, has played a catalytic role in the involvement of enterprises in research activities. So far, 8 Cypriot organizations participate in EUREKA projects.
- The collaboration between DG JRC and the Cypriot Scientific community is growing steadily and today the JRC is working together with some 20 Cypriot

partners – most of these are collaborating through the institutional programme and the remainder through indirect actions.

Another activity aiming at the promotion of international cooperation is the signing of the bilateral agreements in the field of research. So far, agreements have been signed with Greece, France, and Slovenia whereas preliminary discussions are under way with various European and Arab Countries, such as Egypt. The aim of this last initiative is to make Cyprus a link between Europe and the Arab world.

The Government of Cyprus has fully recognized the importance of research and innovation in growth strategy. Thus, its aim is to take advantage of the position of Cyprus at the crossroads of three continents and become an important regional centre in research and at the same time narrow the gap in the level of RTD activities between Cyprus and our European partners.

**Table 1. Structure of RPF's Programmes**

<b>ACTIVITY AREA</b>	<b>RESEARCH PROGRAMME</b>	<b>SPECIFIC ACTION</b>	
<b><u>A</u> Multi-thematic Research Development</b>	<b>1. Thematic Actions</b>	<b>Technology</b>	
		<b>Information Society</b>	
		<b>Sustainable Development</b>	
		<b>Society</b>	
		<b>Economy</b>	
		<b>Health</b>	
		<b>Specific Project</b>	
	<b>2. Programme for the Support of Young Researchers</b>	<b>Integration</b>	
		<b>Support</b>	
		<b>Mobility</b>	
	<b>3. Bilateral Agreements</b>	<b>Cyprus – Greece</b>	
		<b>Cyprus – France</b>	
		<b>Cyprus – Slovenia</b>	
<b>Cyprus – Austria</b>			
<b><u>B</u> Applied Research Development</b>	<b>4. Research for Enterprises</b>	<b>Development of New Products and Processes</b>	
		<b>Information Technologies and Telecommunication Applications in the Development of New Products and Processes</b>	
		<b>Information Technologies and Telecommunication Applications in the Service Sector</b>	
	<b>5. EUREKA Cyprus</b>	<b>New Projects</b>	
		<b>Ongoing Projects</b>	
		<b>Support Projects</b>	
	<b>6. Follow-up Scheme</b>	<b>RPF Projects</b>	
		<b>General Projects</b>	
	<b><u>C</u> Infrastructure Development and Research</b>	<b>7. Research Infrastructure</b>	<b>Infrastructure Networks</b>
			<b>Upgrading of Existing Infrastructure</b>
<b>New Infrastructure</b>			
<b>8. Participation in the ESF</b>		<b>European Science Foundation Collaborative Research Programmes (EUROCORES)</b>	

<b>Support</b>		<b>'À la carte' Scientific Programmes</b>
	<b>9. Expatriate Researchers</b>	<b>Hosting an Experienced Expatriate Researcher</b>
		<b>Hosting a Young Expatriate Researcher</b>
	<b>10. Research Development and Support Measures</b>	<b>Participation in FP6</b>
		<b>Conference Participation</b>
		<b>RPF Research Publications</b>
	<b>11. Research Activities Development in the Cypriot Educational System</b>	<b>Pupils in Research</b>
		<b>Research Competition for Undergraduate Students</b>