Promoting the participation of young researchers in *ICT FET Open*

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Introducing „on-the-fly“ session for YR

Follow up of the ICT 2008 Lyon workshop, planned EU project to investigate present and new access opportunities of young researchers in FET Open collaborative research

- The young researcher’s environment
  - between scientific dependence, “quasi-independence”, and “early independence”
  - traditional academic pathways, settings, and discipline segmentation
  - the “Collaborative research dilemma”

- The young researcher’s challenge
  - overcoming access barriers to project funding
  - fostering the dynamism and creativity of YR

- The young researcher between “conventional” and “innovative” opportunities
  - new FET Open instruments vs. soft incentives in FET Open
  - early scientific independence vs. senior researcher schooling
  - staying in Europe (or: repatriating) vs. going overseas
Intro I: The bottom line of the issue

- Political research agenda:
  - aim is to train, attract, and keep (win) the best young researchers for science
  - early independence as concept is acquired.

- But: how can this be achieved with ‘FET Open’, and why is it necessary to ‘open up’ ‘FET Open’ to this crucial issue?

- How is the European funding architecture organized? How do the programmes view the young scientists? What is already covered, and what still remains open? And where precisely is a chance for ‘FET Open’ to join in?

- Which are the “windows of opportunities” during the life cycle of young scientists? I.e. at which moment should an adequate offer be extended, and what exactly should it look like? What would be the expectations of ‘FET Open’ vis-à-vis YR? And, in turn, which would be the YRs’ expectations?
Intro II: Defining the ‘young researcher’ phase

No age restriction

Post-Doc years

PhD phase

Post-Doc phase

Young Post-Doc (0 - ~ 3 y)

Senior young Post-Doc (< 10 y)

*Marie Curie* ‘young researcher’ definition

International profile building

Early independence
Intro III: Opportunities and pitfalls

- Avoiding duplication of instruments for YR that are already available in the funding landscape on national and international level.

- Pursuing ‘FET Open’ (purpose driven): “Exploring new horizons”, “ICT relevant, visionary (...), long-term research of fundamental nature”, “bright new ideas of high risk”, “breakthrough”, “paradigm shift”, “non-incremental”. Or: bringing such ideas to the “maturity level” (ICT WP 2007, p56).

- Aiming at instruments where both quality of research projects and training features go hand in hand (research projects are no training field in the first place).

- Taking into account tight limitation of programme budgets that imply suggestions limited to simple budget reallocation w.r.t. to ICT and People/Marie Curie

- Following set of suggestions aims at different levels of YR involvement and builds on different cost/budget intensities (discussion basis); 2 and 3 are long term oriented (FP8?), 1 and 4 may perhaps be implemented more quickly
0. Overview

I. FET Junior Research Grant

II. FET-HFSP Young Investigator

III. Long term Fellowship (1-2 years)

IV. Improving participation in CP & CSA ("soft incentives")
I. FET Junior Research Grant

Basic idea: looking out for a dynamic and light project driven opportunity -

- small Collaborative project (CP)
- three partners (incl. industry)
- ‘small budget’ projects, low administrative / management efforts
- allowing for highly innovative YR to combine efforts on a European level
- ‘purpose’ driven, bottom-up
- ‘two-stages’ application (ERC model: 15 pages for full proposal)
I. FET Junior Research Grant

• Pros:

Via combining dynamic research and training, this instrument offers YR the opportunity to get involved in FET on their own responsibility ('early independence'). This makes the instrument an explicit 'window of opportunity' for YR. The grants would support the visibility of YR and foster early networking with other labs and industry.

• Cons:

YR are already involved in regular CP (but on which level?). In addition, there are similar team and project orientated funding programmes for innovative YR (ERC, HFSP, DFG). This would be a highly cost-intensive YR action.
II. FET-HFSP Young Investigator

Basic idea: “EMBO” model - young investigators to collaborate and network

- 5 years’ fixed amount contribution for international networking activities (15,000 € p.a.)
- junior independent group leaders with FET relevant projects
- ‘purpose’ driven, bottom-up
- instrument: CSA (Coordination and Support Action)
- open for participation of ERC Grantees working in ICT FET Open related fields
II. FET-HFSP Young Investigator

• **Pros:**

Dynamic instrument to **cross-link the best YR** that already transit to ‘independence’ and which work in various FET Open relevant fields, interdisciplinary.

• **Cons:**

Avoiding overlaps with existing funding programmes (EMBO YIP).
III. Long term Fellowships (1-2 years)

Basic idea: (re-)introducing the individual component with ‘FET Open’ orientation

- ‘long term vision’ (FP8)
- postdoctoral level (alternatively min. 4 years postgraduate experience)
- ‘purpose’ driven, bottom-up
- co-organised with Marie Curie, joint FET Open Marie Curie label
III. Long term Fellowships (1-2 years)

• **Pros:**

Adding to Marie Curie a scientifically and technically more efficient FET suited feature and would foster a long term involvement of individual YR in the FET-Scheme.

• **Cons:**

Instrument would possibly mean a reduction of the Marie Curie funding for ‘bottom up’ research. Furthermore, it might be seen as a FP5 reminiscence.
IV. Improving programme participation

Basic idea: better usage of existing instruments and lines, introduction of new features

- Part B of small CP: include section ‘Integration of young researchers’ (1 page)
- Evaluation criteria: including ‘Quality of involvement of YR’ into implementation section
- Large scale CP: strengthen involvement or YR training modules, curriculum co-operation with universities w.r.t. innovative courses or study programmes
- CSA: slot for training conferences (with Marie Curie label) or conference modules with training aspects

... and finally, the Research Training Networks’ blues.
IV. Improving participation in CP & CSA

• **Pros:**

The implementation of these ideas is easy and mostly cost neutral.

• **Cons:**

Collaborative Research Projects are not ‘training programmes’.
Thank you for your attention!

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