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*(Announcements)*

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

## EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK

**Call for proposals — The European Investment Bank Institute proposes two new EIBURS sponsorships under its knowledge programme**

(2013/C 162/07)

The European Investment Bank Institute channels most of its institutional relations with universities through its knowledge programme, consisting of three different programmes:

- **EIBURS**, the **EIB University Research Sponsorship** programme,
- **STAREBEI (STAgés de REcherche BEI)**, a programme for financing young researchers working on joint EIB-university projects, and
- **EIB University Networks**, a cooperation mechanism for university networks displaying characteristics that are of particular relevance to supporting the objectives of the EIB Group.

**EIBURS** provides grants to university research centres working on research topics and themes of major interest to the Bank. EIB sponsorships, of up to EUR 100 000 per year for a period of three years, are awarded through a competitive process to interested university departments or research centres associated with universities in EU, candidate or potential candidate countries, with recognised expertise in EIB-selected areas, so that they can expand their activities in these areas. Successful proposals entail the delivery of a variety of outputs (research, organisation of courses and seminars, networking, dissemination of results, etc.) that will be the subject of a contractual agreement with the Bank.

For the academic year 2013/14, the **EIBURS** programme has selected two new lines of research:

**Smart city development: Applying European and international experience to the Mediterranean region**

Urban development has become a key priority for the countries of the Mediterranean region, both at the national and international level, and within the EIB via its FEMIP programme. The 'smart city' concept (originally defined as the 'considered' application of ICT to facilitate efficient, inclusive and integrated urban development, but more broadly to include sustainability, innovation and governance, as well as investments in public transport, energy efficiency and research facilities) is potentially an important dimension. However, there is a need to forge a framework to connect the technology and public policy aspects with the realities of city management, municipal financing and investment programming in the region.

The university research centre receiving support under the EIBURS would be expected to pursue a research programme focused on the following key questions, building on European and other international experience:

- How can smart city initiatives contribute to meeting urban development priorities?
- How can we best define a smart city concept suited to application in the region?
- Which features and examples of European and international best practice are most suitable to draw on for such application?
- What is the array of tangible investments potentially feasible under a smart city investment programme, and how should alternatives be prioritised?
- How do potential smart city initiatives map to the municipal management, governance and financing presently existing?
- How should smart city investments be appraised economically for comparison with alternative investment options, to ensure that they deliver value to society?
- How can smart city investments or investment programmes best be developed and implemented?

The regional focus of the proposals would be focused on, but not limited to, FEMIP countries. Applicants are encouraged to establish partnerships with other universities and research centres. The Bank may facilitate the involvement of the selected university/research centre in its networking activities via the Union for the Mediterranean or the Centre for Mediterranean Integration.

### **Administrative capacity-building in Europe**

The capacity of public administrations to effectively and efficiently perform the various functions required of Government, including the planning and delivery of infrastructure and public services, has an important impact on the everyday lives of citizens and on the functioning of the private sector. The OECD defines capacity-building as the means by which skills, experience, technical and management capacity are developed within an organisational structure (contractors, consultants or contracting agencies) — often through the provision of technical assistance, short-/long-term training, and specialist inputs (e.g., IT systems). The process may involve the development of human, organisational, material and financial resources.

Originally, a concept employed in a development context, notably by the UN and World Bank, the need to strengthen institutions through administrative capacity-building (ACB) has become an integral part of the European enlargement process, when ACB programmes became an important element of support to countries aspiring to join the EU and adopt the *acquis communautaire*. Even after accession, new EU Member States continue to receive funding for self-managed ACB operational programmes, notably from the structural funds. With billions of euros at stake, improving the effectiveness of how public administrations direct and manage public investment programmes is an urgent challenge. At the project level, the EIB frequently supports implementation capacity development through technical assistance to project implementation units (PIU).

The body of scientific evidence about what ACB measures do and don't work in different contexts remains thin. What is it that really builds administrative capacity and strong institutions in the long run? Is it simply a question of having a sufficient number of well-trained, adequately paid staff, setting key performance indicators (KPIs), and transparently reporting expenditure and results? Are outsourcing and public-private partnerships a magic cure for limited public sector capacity? Are models sector-specific, such as for

transport, environment and home affairs, or are they generic? Are there benefits from peer learning across public administrations in different EU countries? What lessons are there from the 'new public management' of KPI-measured results, resource prioritisation and fiscal discipline?

The purpose of this research is to deepen the knowledge on the conceptual frameworks, diagnosis, metrics, and models for effective ACB in practice. Research proposals are invited on any topic that advances knowledge in this area. However, preference will be given to proposals that adopt a pan-European perspective and address both theoretical and practical aspects of ACB linked to the planning and delivery of infrastructure and related public services. Proposals with a direct link to operational decision-making and with scope to improve absorption of EU funds used for high-quality investments are particularly welcome.

Proposals should be submitted in English or French and the deadline for presentation of proposals is 13 September 2013. Proposals submitted after this date will not be considered. Proposals should be sent to:

**Electronic copy:**

events.eibinstitute@eib.org

and

**Hard copy:**

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For the attention of Ms Luisa FERREIRA, Coordinator.

*For more exhaustive information on the **EIBURS** selection process and on the other programmes and mechanisms, please visit: <http://institute.eib.org/>*

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