



Rome, 31/08/09

The European Commission and the cosmetic industry match research funds to develop alternative solutions to animal testing

Today at the VII World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life Sciences in Rome, the European Commission and the European cosmetic industry presented their joint financial effort for research into alternative safety testing methods. On 30 July 2009, the European Commission launched a €25 million call for proposals in this field and the European cosmetic industry, represented by the European Cosmetics Association (Colipa), committed to give the same amount of support. As a result, up to €50 million will be allocated to research projects laying the scientific foundation for future safety testing methods with a higher predictive value, and that will be faster and cheaper than animal tests.

EU Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potočnik and Vice-President Günter Verheugen said: "We are proud of this first-of-its-kind cooperation between industry and the European Commission. It proves our determination to avoid the use of animals in research while increasing the safety of products for consumers. Faster, cheaper and more reliable alternative methods will both contribute to this increased safety and strengthen the competitiveness of the European industry. Pooling resources with private partners like the cosmetic industry is crucial to finance the long-term cutting-edge research required to meet these challenges".

Director-General of Colipa, Bertil Heerink said: "For over 20 years, the cosmetic industry has been committed to the elimination of the use of animals for safety testing. Our industry welcomes the opportunity to contribute funding to this initiative, which has a key role to play in the process towards full replacement of animal safety tests in the scientifically complex area of systemic toxicity".

Why research is needed

The call for proposals focuses on "repeated dose systemic toxicity". It is about predicting the toxicity of the repeated use, over a long period of time, of substances including those that are mainly used in cosmetic products. Any substance used in a cosmetic product on the market today has been tested at some point to make sure that it does not cause harm to consumers. Despite the significant progress made on non-animal test methods, there are still gaps in scientific knowledge that need to be

filled in order to further reduce the use of animals in safety tests, while continuing to guarantee the safety of cosmetic products.

What the research will be about

With this call, the European Commission is seeking proposals for research projects involving a wide range of scientific partners across Europe and focusing on the following topics:

- development of organ-simulating devices;
- use of human-based target cells;
- definition of new toxicological endpoints and intermediate markers
- computational modelling techniques
- exploitation of approaches developed in systems biology; and
- integrated data analysis and scientific services.

It should be noted that:

- Only proposals not involving tests on living animals are eligible for funding.
- The results of the projects may not only benefit the cosmetic industry but also the pharmaceutical and chemical industry and other relevant sectors.
- A coordination action will be also funded to report the results and progress of the projects and avoid duplication of efforts.

How research will be funded

Thanks to the co-operation between the European Commission and Colipa, the projects selected can be funded up to 100% of their total eligible costs. For each proposal evaluated and selected by the European Commission, the cosmetic industry is committed to providing additional equivalent funding.

The deadline of the call for proposals is 3 February 2010. The projects selected will be announced in spring 2010.

Background

The Commission is strongly committed to finding alternatives methods to testing on animals. The 3Rs Principle (Replacing, Reducing and Refining animal testing) is present in several EU legislation texts such as the Directive on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes, the REACH regulation (on chemicals and their safe use) and the Cosmetics Directive (which aims to phase out animal testing). In 20 years, the financial EU contribution to research on alternative testing methods has amounted to some EUR 200 million under the EU's Framework Programme for Science and Research. The Commission's Joint Research Centre also hosts the European Centre for Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) and recently launched the website TSAR to track the development of new alternative test methods.

Colipa, the European Cosmetics Association, represents several thousand companies in the cosmetic industry in Europe. Colipa plays a leading role in the development of alternative testing methods and is already working with the European Commission and other sector organisations through the European Partnership for Alternatives to Animal Testing (EPAA).

Find out more about:

- [The call for proposals](#) FP7-HEALTH-2010-Alternative-Testing

- Colipa (the European Cosmetics Association)

<http://www.colipa.eu/about-colipa.html>

- The European Partnership for Alternatives to Animal Testing

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/epaa/index_en.htm

- Alternative Testing Strategies supported by the EU

<http://cordis.europa.eu/documents/documentlibrary/106691831EN6.pdf>

- ECVAM

<http://ecvam.jrc.it/>

- TSAR

<http://tsar.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>