



Topic

HEALTH-2007-2.3.3-7: Supporting highly innovative inter-disciplinary research on influenza

Funding Scheme

Collaborative project: Small or medium-scale focused research project

Project coordinator

PiKe Pharma GmbH, Zurich, Switzerland

Project Duration

January 2008 – March 2010



The 2009 H1N1 pandemic has illustrated the urgent need for new therapeutics for the treatment of both pandemic and seasonal influenza infections. FLUINHIBIT's major objective is the discovery of small molecule inhibitors of influenza polymerase subunit interactions as novel antiviral drug candidates, which will help to protect the public against future flu pandemics.

PiKe Pharma GmbH	CH	SME
University Hospital Freiburg	DE	UNI
Institute of Biotechnology	LT	UNI
Inte:Ligand GmbH	AT	SME
Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research	DE	RC
University of Siena	IT	UNI

Founded in 2006 as an ETH Zürich spin-off company, PiKe Pharma's objective is to become a profitable, research-focused pharmaceutical company with a growing pipeline of drug candidates and increasing portfolio value. At PiKe Pharma GmbH they strive to provide patients with better antiviral drugs in therapeutic areas where limited treatment options are available

What problems did you encounter during the project?

How did you experience the project proposal phase?

Dr. B. Pilger (project coordinator): When we became aware of the call for proposals, the submission deadline was only eight weeks away. Having no experience with the Commission's Framework Programme at all, we were hesitant to participate despite the perfect fit between our research activities and the call topic. Fortunately, our National Contact Point (NCP) convinced us to build a consortium and submit an application. It was tough, but even first-timers can successfully navigate the proposal writing process with the help from experienced partners and their NCP.

How did you experience the negotiation phase?

Dr. B. Pilger: Since the evaluators had only suggested a few minor changes, the negotiation phase was a pleasant experience. Our Scientific and Financial Officers were very helpful and the amount of administrative work was much lower than anticipated.

Do you have any suggestions for other SMEs/Academia that would like to get involved in such projects?

Dr. B. Pilger: Get in touch with your NCP or one of the regional support offices as we did with the Swiss Health NCP, member of the SMEs go Health network. Don't be scared by the rumours and myths about administrative aspects and intransparent evaluations; these are not true. Visit workshops and fairs for participants/applicants. You will get in touch with people, from whom you can learn. Participation in a FP7 project will teach you how to best exploit international industry-academia collaborations and broaden your scientific network. Even if the application is not successful, you will benefit from new ideas and contacts in the future.