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Situation Report on NEST calls for proposals

**NEST PATHFINDER
Experience First Call**

NEST NCP Meeting 2004
Brussels, 6 October 2004





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PATHFINDER: Mandate

“support research on specific topics that are identified during the course of implementation of FP6 on the basis of their urgency and potential for future societal, industrial or economic relevance.”





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Pathfinder topics 2004

Tackling complexity in science

- Explore inter-disciplinary approaches and techniques to deal with complex problems in diverse areas of science

Synthetic biology

- Develop engineering, device-oriented approaches to working with sub-cellular building blocks

What it means to be human

- Towards an integrated understanding of the human mind, by uniting diverse but relevant disciplines





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PATHFINDER: Implementation

- Build and consolidate European capabilities in promising emerging (interdisciplinary) areas with high future potential for Europe in the long term.
- Provide “early stage funding”: as ideas mature they should be translated into more conventional funding modes
- Up to 10 Mio. EUR or more per topic (for several STREPS + one or more CAs)
- Annual calls for proposals; several topics per call
- First call 17 December 2003, closure 14 April 2004





STREP projects

- Each PATHFINDER initiative/topic will be composed of several STREP projects submitted individually (not as clusters)
- Proposals have to be submitted as FULL proposals (one stage evaluation process not two stages as in NEST-OPEN)
- Proposers need to choose clearly one PATHFINDER initiative/topic they are addressing
- Proposals will be evaluated and selected on their individual merits
- Projects funded within a PATHFINDER initiative will be expected to develop a degree of interaction, exchange and cooperation
- Project size expected to be in the 1-1.5 Mio. EUR range; 4 - 6 partners





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Coordination Actions

- Expect to fund one (exceptionally more) co-ordination action for each PATHFINDER initiative/topic
- Co-ordination actions will be evaluated and selected at the same time as the STREP proposals
- Role of co-ordination depends on topic
- An added task will be to provide a means and venue of interaction for the chosen projects
- Funding expected to be in the 0.5 to 1 Mio. Euro range; 15 – 25 partners



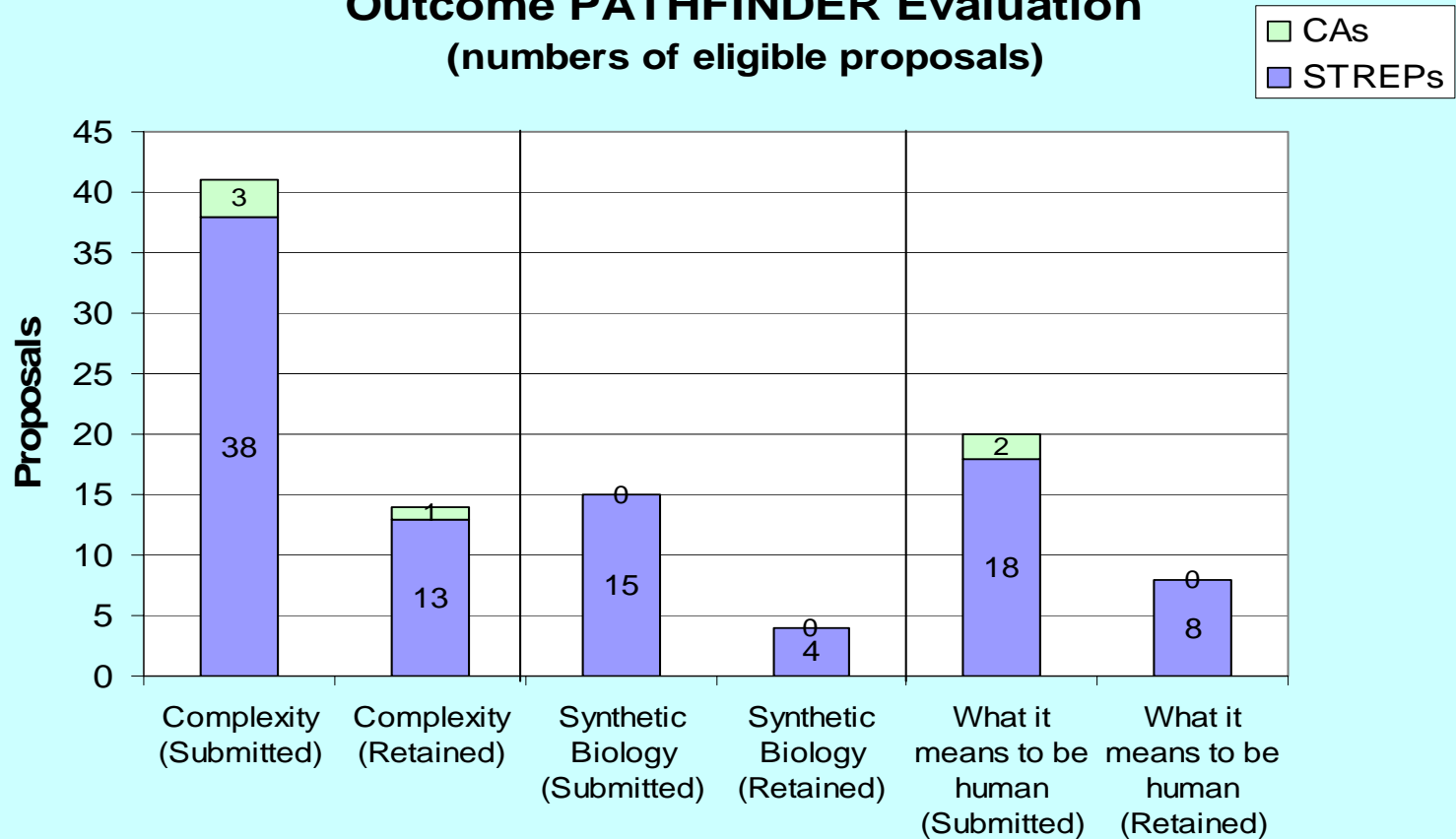


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PATHFINDER evaluation

Outcome PATHFINDER Evaluation
(numbers of eligible proposals)





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lessons from first call

- PATHFINDER well received:
 - Significant interest, high quality proposals
- Promoting inter-disciplinarity depends upon a “strategic” methodology
 - First topics recognised as important strategic areas for Europe
 - Rigorous protection of the interdisciplinary dimension is required (“relevance” criterion for evaluation)
- Emerging inter-disciplinary research areas take time to “grow”
 - Building awareness of the topic, attracting proposals
 - Generating cohesion in the “community of knowledge” (cf CA proposals)





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work programme update issues

- Limited resources must be deployed prudently
- Implications:
 - Make a serious commitment to a small number of new interdisciplinary topics
 - Develop topics over a period of time
 - Generate one new topic each year for new PATHFINDER initiatives
 - Build capacity for identifying new topics with support actions.

