



## Open Competition for VERE Applications

### Summary

The VERE IP project (Virtual Embodiment and Robotic re-Embodiment), funded under the European Commission's Seventh Framework Program, is launching an open competition for the best novel application(s) using its platform and concepts in new and innovative ways. The prize foreseen for the winner of the competition is 10,000€.

The absolute deadline of the call is **30 March 2012, 17:00 CET** (Brussels time).

### About VERE

VERE – EC Grant agreement no. 257695 - is a large European integrated project which aims to carry out research into the fusion of the human body with virtual or physical surrogates. People will be endowed with surrogate bodies that they feel to be their own, even though they know that this feeling is an illusion. The surrogate bodies can be either virtual avatars or physical robots. The goals of the project can best be understood by considering the films *Avatar* (2009) or *Surrogates* (2009). Essentially the project aims at an implementation of the types of embodiment presented in those movies, but with what is possible with technology that can be developed *in the next 3 years*.

The project started on 1 June 2010 and is scheduled to run for 60 months. More information about the VERE project here: <http://www.vereproject.eu/>

### Invitation to Submit New Applications

Project VERE is aware that there is a wide range of worthy applications out there that can benefit from the use of the technologies currently being developed within the project. Likewise, novel uses and demonstration of the project's tools will undoubtedly enhance the exploitation prospects and increase awareness of VERE's results.

It is in this spirit of exploration of new horizons that the project is launching the current call for ideas for novel applications.

The challenge is to come up with new and potentially radical applications of the VERE technology in domains of your choosing - provided they conform to the general guidelines of the EC - and to demonstrate its uses within a scenario making use of the VERE platform.

Below we give a non-exhaustive list of potential domains:

- rehabilitation e.g. physical, psychological, social (already being developed in the consortium)
- psychotherapy e.g. treatment of phobias
- cultural e.g. theatre, story-telling, film, musical performances
- journalism e.g. interviews, reporting, immersive experiences of news stories
- education and training
- business applications e.g. negotiations, collaborative working
- social interaction e.g. helping the aged, game playing

### Assistance and Information Available to Proposers

- Helpline for technical and procedural queries:  
opencall@vereproject.org. (Subject heading *must include* "VERE Open Call for Applications")
- (Optional) Visit to VERE sites, with prior arrangement and at own expense.



## Selection Procedure

VERE has established a Competition Committee for the purpose of evaluating the proposals, under the chairmanship of the coordinator. The committee is made up of senior researchers of the VERE consortium who are familiar with the vision and goals of the project and who have a good understanding of the underlying concepts and technologies. In addition we have made provisions to co-opt experts from fields different to our own, such as the entertainment industry, to assist with the selection decision.

Following the deadline of the call, a two-phase selection procedure is foreseen.

In the first phase the VERE Management team will screen all entries to ensure that they comply with the competition rules ("Competition Rules"). The committee members will then evaluate all qualifying submissions, based on the criteria of selection outlined in the next section. They will do so by first grading the proposals individually. Then, as a second step, they will convene and arrive at a consensus, by selecting the 4 top proposals. The committee's decision on its selection will be final and there will be no right of appeal.

In the second phase of the competition, the shortlisted proposers will be asked to proceed with the implementation of their concept. The finalists will be allocated a fixed period in which to realize and demonstrate their scenario. The resulting prototype demonstrators will be judged by the competition committee. The entry deemed to be the winner will be awarded the 10,000€ prize. In the event of a tie, the chairperson of the Competition Committee will have a casting vote.

## Criteria for Selection

A number of criteria for selection will be used to make the final decision. These will include:

- 'Wow' factor of the proposed concept – including novelty of the idea and the originality of the approach
- Feasibility – practical and implementable ideas will be favoured
- Commitment to the solution – follow-up plans and use of the concepts in future work of the proposers will be seen as a plus
- Demonstrable impact in the field – be it artistic, medical, scientific, or relevant to the domain of the application
- 'Stand-alone' quality of the approach - with minimal dependence on the existing resources of VERE partners e.g. requiring the implementation of additional features. (Assistance with understanding the technical details of the VERE environment and its uses will be provided to all participants.)

## Competition Rules

Although every effort has been made to ease the conditions of participation in the competition, the following rules will nevertheless apply:

- Proposals may be submitted by individuals, groups of individuals, or organisations
- Submissions must be through prior registration. Intention to submit must be registered by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012 (via email to [opencall@vereproject.org](mailto:opencall@vereproject.org))
- The implementations by the short-listed finalists must be completed within the deadline set by VERE. This is currently envisaged to be **30 May 2013** (subject to revision)
- The intellectual property rights (IPR) of the applications developed will rest with the proposer. However the project will have the right to demonstrate the results and make use of it for wider dissemination under the banner of 'VERE', with due credit to the developers
- The IPR of the application will be subject to the same rules and regulations of the existing Consortium Agreement, which the winning party will be asked to agree and sign. If a finalist is unwilling to enter into the Consortium Agreement it will lose its place as a finalist and the committee will endeavour to replace it with the next reserve entry.
- Applications in the process of development under a separate funding scheme (e.g. existing EU contract) will not be eligible if the IPR issues conflict with those of the VERE competition rules
- Applications with ethical issues e.g. involving animals or children, must be cleared in advance with the appropriate national bodies
- Potential proposers may visit VERE sites at their own expense before the submission of their idea, with the explicit and written agreement of the sites concerned. They may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.
- Applications will not be accepted from members of the VERE consortium



## Benefits of Participation in the Competition

- The winner of the competition will be awarded a 10,000 EUR prize
- The short-listed participants will have the opportunity to be closely associated with the developments of VERE, a high profile project within the EU's Future Emerging Technologies Programme
- The four short-listed ideas will be made into VERE Project posters, for dissemination at several EC conferences and venues, with full accreditation to the competitors and the winner.
- The short-listed participants will be given assistance in writing a paper (conference, scientific journal) for presentation and/or publication at a suitable forum with full first-author accreditation
- The selection committee's decision will be final and there will be no right of appeal.

## Timeline of the Call

30 March 2011 – Committee and rules formed for the open competition (Milestone 9.2)

01 February 2012 – Register submission title (mandatory)

30 March 2012 (17:00hrs) – Absolute deadline of submission

30 April 2012 – Short-listed proposals announced (Milestone 9.5)

30 April 2013 – Competition End – Presentation of scenario demonstrators at a VERE event (to be announced)

31 May 2013 – Deliverable Report on the status of the open competition (Deliverable 9.7)

## How to submit

You must register your intention to submit by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012. This should be done by sending an email to the VERE coordinator at [opencall@vereproject.org](mailto:opencall@vereproject.org). The email **must have** as subject header "VERE Open Competition". The email body should contain the title of the proposal, the name(s) of the proposer(s), and a few lines description, in addition to the attachment of the full proposal.

Following this a unique Dropbox account will be established per entrant that can only be accessed by the proposers and the VERE committee members.

Submissions must be made by 30<sup>st</sup> March, 2012 17:00hrs CET. There will be no extension of this deadline for any reason. The proposal must be submitted by upload to the unique Dropbox folder with a corresponding confirmatory email which **must have** as subject header "VERE Open Competition".

Submissions will be by PDF and supporting files (such as media files) and must conform to the following formatting rules:

- No more than 4 pages in total
- Font size no less than 10 point
- All margins no less than 3cm
- Single column and single line spacing
- Top and bottom margins no less than 2.54 cm
- Left and right margins no less than 3.17 cm

Contents of the proposal:

- Half a page abstract of the main ideas of the proposal
- 1.5 pages of the details of the proposal, including an outline timeplan.
- 1 page CV of the applicants

Media (Optional)

- One video file of no more than 5 minutes in length (it is the responsibility of the submitters to choose a video format that will work on the majority of machine types).
- Images or other supporting media of no more than 10MB.

Proposals that do not conform to these restrictions will not be considered.



**VERE**

## Contact Details

**VERE Coordinator: Prof. Mel Slater**

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**VERE Web: <http://www.vereproject.eu/>**

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