This public consultation invites views on the needs in nanotechnology in the next five years, as perceived by experts active in the field and by the public at large.

Nanotechnologies hold great potential in areas as diverse as health, energy production and efficiency, transport and manufacturing. This potential may help achieving sustainable development and enhancing Europe's industrial competitiveness. To unlock this potential and gain the greatest benefits while minimising adverse impacts on health and the environment, the European Commission follows an "integrated, safe and responsible approach". The **Nanotechnology Action Plan 2005-2009** provided a first impetus on the road towards diverse developments, combined with a high level of attention to the protection of workers, consumers and the environment; and to public dialogue and ethical issues.

Public funding in nanotechnology research in the five years to 2009 has exceeded EUR 7 billion, nearly a third coming from the Community Research Framework Programmes. Hundreds of projects have enhanced fundamental understanding and produced promising results for applications in areas ranging from nanoelectronics to nanomedicine. The Commission and Member States have supported research infrastructures and also education and training in nanosciences and nanotechnologies.

These developments have been matched by a wide range of activities to ensure the responsible development of nanotechnology applications, in a way that takes people's expectations and concerns into account. These activities were complemented by a careful review of the regulatory landscape, reflections on ethical issues and outreach. This work is being carried out in close cooperation with Member States and Europe's international partners.

Details of all this work can be found in the recent Commission Communication on the **Implementation of the Nanotechnology Action Plan** (COM(2009)607) and its accompanying **Staff Working Document** (SEC(2009)1468). </SEC(2009)1468).

To capitalize on the benefits from all these efforts, Europe must develop further its ability to translate research results into innovative products and processes. This is one of the reasons why the Commission is now considering a new Action Plan for Nanotechnology.

The main objective of this Action Plan will be to address the technological and societal challenges of the next five years and to strengthen the research and innovation efforts, with increased emphasis on sustainable development, competitiveness, health, safety and environmental issues. It is necessary to advance the fundamental understanding of how nanomaterials behave throughout their life cycle, to ensure product safety and a high level of protection of human health and the environment – while taking full advantage of the benefits of the new technologies. Work on effective implementation of regulation will also continue. Also essential is interdisciplinary collaboration. All this must be done in a climate of trust built on a direct and continuous societal dialogue.

We now invite you to confirm your status (citizen, organisation or public authority) and complete the short questionnaire that follows. We will report on the outcome of the consultation, taking all contributions into account.