

EU science projects win up to billion euros each

BRUSSELS (AP)—Two science projects—one to map the human brain, the other to explore the extraordinary properties of the carbon-based material graphene—were declared the winners Monday of an EU technologies contest and will receive up to €1 billion (\$1.35 billion) each over the next 10 years.

The projects were selected from four finalists that been chosen from 26 proposals.

"European's position as a knowledge superpower depends on thinking the unthinkable and exploiting the best ideas," European Commission Vice President Neelie Kroes said in a statement Monday. "This multi-billion competition rewards home-grown scientific breakthroughs and shows that when we are ambitious we can develop the best research in Europe."

The Human Brain Project will use supercomputers to create the most detailed model of the human brain to date, then simulate drugs and treatments for neurological diseases and related ailments.

"The pharmaceutical industry won't do this, computing companies won't do this—there's too much fundamental science," said Henry Markram, a professor of neuroscience at the Ecole Polytechnique Federale of Lausanne in Switzerland, earlier this year. "This is one project which absolutely needs public funding."

The other project will investigate the possible uses of graphene, the thinnest known material, which conducts electricity far better than copper, is at least 100 times stronger than steel, and has unique optical properties. Important future uses include the development of fast, flexible and strong consumer electronics, bendable personal communication devices, lighter airplanes and artificial retinas.

The project will be led by Prof. Jari Kinaret of the Chalmers University of Technology in Goteborg, Sweden.

Each of the projects—called "flagships" by the contest organizers—will receive up to €54 million (\$73 million) from the European Commission, with the rest of the money coming from national governments and other sources.

"There will be careful monitoring during the lifetime of the projects so that the flagships continue to be an efficient use of taxpayers' money," the commission said in a statement.

[Human Brain Project](#) [1]

Source: The Associated Press

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