

EURAB recommendations on cooperation with third countries (i.e. non-EU member states or states not associated with the FPs) (June 2005)

International S&T cooperation is of mutual benefit for both the EU and its cooperating partners from third countries. It should be an integral part of FP7. Cooperation with third countries is not an aid but must be viewed as a good investment. The activities planned with different countries and regions should, however, be differentiated according to their thematic and instrumental aspects, and depend on the comparative advantage or need.

Recommendations:

1. Management responsibility for targeted INCO actions should be clear. Best use should be made of the competencies accrued in the INCO Directorate in cooperation with the directorates responsible for the thematic areas. Participation should be eased and matching capacities built up wherever needed.
2. Better coordination of national programmes with those of other EU countries, i.e. bi-laterally, and with EU programmes (common/coordinated strategy setting, ERA-Net, OMC, etc.) is needed to achieve stronger synergies. The potentials of the EU (e.g. in setting standards, IPR, etc.) should be more efficiently utilized to optimize European added value. International cooperation must contribute to these goals, therefore in the FP third countries should be treated as equal partners.
3. Mobility should be widely encouraged, seeking to make Europe an attractive destination for researchers from all over the world. It should be two way and without any restriction on the duration of the stay, etc. The full use of the possibilities offered under the “People” chapter in FP7 is recommended.

4. The concentrated and efficient management of international cooperation is crucial for its efficiency, meaning that strategic visions, political goals and the actual implementation must go together.

5. In order to assure efficient and optimal management in line with the strategic goals, the budget for INCO in FP7 should be under a separate budget line, increased and allocated across the thematic areas. Budgetary allocations should not be made on a pro rate basis, since some thematic areas offer more options than others for meaningful international cooperation.