



DG RTD European Commission

Evaluation of FP6 INCO Programme

Final Synthesis Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Originally launched in 1983 as the so-called Science and Technology for Development Programme, the Specific Measures for International Cooperation (INCO) has constituted one of the three major routes for International Science and Technology cooperation under FP6 (2002-2006).

Based on a regional approach, specific research priorities and eligibility criteria requiring third countries' participation, INCO was designed to address research needs identified according to the specific socio-economic context of the partner regions, whilst securing mutual interest and benefits for both the EU and the targeted Third countries. The dual mandate given to INCO implied not only striving for scientific excellence, but also to respond to institutional needs, such as support to external policies and research capacity building in partner countries as well as ensuring access for European researchers and companies to knowledge systems in other parts of the world.

The implementation of FP6-INCO amounted to €309.9 million, through 387 projects, and 2,729 partners involved, 48% of which from INCO partner countries. Of these, 144 projects were Specific Targeted Research Projects (STREP) with €244.4 million allocated, 23 projects Coordination Actions (CA) with €22.8 million allocated and 220 projects Specific Support Actions (SSA) with €34.8 million. Moreover, €70 million were invested through INTAS for scientific cooperation with Russia and the other NIS.¹

Beyond those numbers, statistical analyses and survey results indicate considerable achievements in terms of Third countries participation: INCO STREPs produced a respectable number of peer reviewed scientific publications, conference proceedings and other outputs. INCO also had some impact on the diversity of Third countries involved in FP6, especially the involvement of Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Countries. All in all, with a limited budget compared to the Thematic Priorities, INCO made a strong contribution to the participation of Third countries in FP6, both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

On a more practical level, network development, access to knowledge and expertise available elsewhere, as well as capability to participate to international research activities were one of the main achievements of INCO projects. In particular, a number of Specific Support Actions were specifically designed to strengthen INCO countries' participation in the Framework Programme by means of developing information, support and matchmaking services. Evidence tends to show that INCO had an impact on intended participation in FP7 and figures indicate a positive trend in the participation of INCO country research teams in FP6 Thematic Priorities and FP7.

The INCO research projects achieved interesting results and their contribution to "research excellence" was positively assessed by involved stake-

¹ Not included in overall €309.9 million as INTAS did not form a part of this evaluation.

holders and participants, and can also be measured with the number of peer-reviewed articles among assessed projects, for example out of the 60 assessed projects, 18 projects produced 103 articles published in peer reviewed journals (out of which the majority were STREPs, 13 projects and 75 articles). Still, other stakeholders outside INCO equated it often more with development than research and this perception was particularly strong among Commission staff in the Thematic Priorities.

These perceptions notwithstanding, INCO enabled the inclusion of otherwise excluded or neglected research issues, such as policy relevant integrated water management, food security or protection and conservation of cultural heritage. These priorities were broadly defined within the political process leading to FP6 and further refined at a regional level, in coherence with regional needs and priorities jointly identified in the EU Regional Strategy Papers.

The analysis showed that the projects' outcomes mainly benefited research teams and systems, and decision makers in Third countries: meaning that INCO was successful in addressing Third countries needs. It was more difficult, however, to find evidence of the effective uptake of these results at policy level, either in Third countries or the EU/Member states. However, it should be noted that the balanced cooperation and the likelihood of continued cooperation within FP7, can be expected to contribute to policy up-take in a longer perspective.

This strong research for development dimension reflects INCO's very specificity: INCO bridged both research and development cooperation. Articulating the EU's science and technology international policy on the one hand and supporting the Community's foreign policy and development aid policy on the other hand, were two overall objectives of INCO.

As a specific programme for International Cooperation in research, INCO complemented the Thematic Priorities, which did not achieve their targets (earmarked budget) in terms of opening activities to Third countries. In this respect, INCO was instrumental in responding to the political commitment towards opening the European Research Area to the world. However, mechanisms to support complementarity between INCO and the Thematic Priorities at the operational level were rather weak and few synergies between projects and programmes could be identified: as a consequence, the INCO programme was considered by the Thematic Priorities directorates as weakly supportive of both the Thematic Priorities and the overall objective of the Framework Programme. There were some exceptions however, making the case for a more systematic set-up, such as the EU Water Initiative, which provided such a common political framework, dividing the work between INCO and the Thematic Priorities and involving development cooperation activities at EC and Member State level to achieve a common objective.

Similar conclusions can be drawn from the complementarity analysis between INCO at large and other external policies of the EU. Whilst priorities

were aligned (INCO priorities fully corresponded to the EU regional priorities as defined in the Strategy Papers), research activities were not identified as a priority in the EU's external and development aid policies. Hence, INCO filled a gap in addressing research needs of Third countries within the limited funds available. However, mechanisms to support complementarity and synergy between projects and programmes were found lacking, thus reducing potential impact in providing scientifically validated knowledge for solving problems. Especially, cooperation with the EC's delegations in Third countries was weak, and INCO suffered from a lack of awareness among potential stakeholders.

To conclude, the evaluation of FP6 INCO offers a picture that is generally positive, meaning that INCO achieved most of its objectives and paved the way towards further participation of Third countries in FP7. The evaluators also highlight areas of possible improvement, of which the most important can be summarised as follows:

- Improve communication with EC delegations on all facets of international research activities;
- Define a specific political framework to facilitate cooperation across the Commission's policy DGs and their Instruments, in order to ensure more explicit complementarity and create synergy. This should contribute to addressing important issues efficiently with limited resources. In this regard, the EU Water Initiative and EDCTP are success stories to build on.
- Generally improve communication of international scientific cooperation to address widespread lack of awareness across a range of stakeholders. This should also help build broader understanding of the critical role of such cooperation for sustainable development and the pursuit of Europe's own post-Lisbon agenda as much as for meeting objectives of external relations and several other policies.
- Systematise interaction between policy DGs and with European Member States.

Table of contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	Use of the evaluation of FP6 INCO	1
1.2	Outline of report	2
2.	Background and intervention logic of FP6 INCO	3
2.1	Setup and scope of the FP6 INCO Programme	3
2.2	Intervention logic of FP6 INCO	5
3.	Strengthening research capacities (effectiveness)	8
3.1	Increased and improved participation of INCO targeted countries in projects	8
3.2	Strengthening research networks and facilitating access to knowledge and capacities	11
3.3	Enhancing participation of INCO targeted countries to the Framework Programme and other international cooperation activities	13
3.4	Achieving research excellence	16
4.	Addressing Third Countries needs (effectiveness)	20
4.1	Addressing regional needs through the INCO priorities	20
4.2	The strong development cooperation dimension of the projects	23
4.3	Expectations on the uptake of results and their potential effects at policy level	25
5.	Supporting the Community's research policies and development cooperation policies (complementarity)	28
5.1	Supporting internationalisation of the Thematic Priorities	28
5.2	Supporting the EU external and development aid policies	30
6.	Conclusions and lessons learned	33

1. Introduction

Ramboll Management and Euréval have conducted the evaluation of the International S&T Cooperation within the FP6 Specific Measures to Support International Cooperation (INCO) from 2004 to 2006.

This report constitutes the final synthesised report for the evaluation, analysing the achievements of the INCO programme and presenting main findings and lessons learned from the evaluation. For a more comprehensive and descriptive picture of the programme, please refer to the long version of the evaluation report² as well as annexes to this report. The methodology is explained in detail in annexes.

1.1 Use of the evaluation of FP6 INCO

The evaluation of FP6 INCO ties and will feed into the ex post evaluation of the 6th Framework Programme which will address the issues of rationale, impacts and achievements. The ex-post evaluation will be carried out by independent high-level experts, supported by an extensive evidence base including studies at Framework Programme, Specific Programme and Thematic Priority levels.

In this context the International Cooperation Directorate of General Directorate Research launched the evaluation of the "Specific measures in support of International Cooperation" under the Sixth Framework Programme. The evaluation assessed the following key questions on the achievements of FP6 INCO, as defined by the Terms of Reference for the assignment:

- What research areas have proved that scientific excellence can only be achieved if carried out with Third Countries research teams?
- What has been the added value of FP6 INCO? What are its peculiarities if compared to research with Third Countries funded under the Thematic Priorities?
- Has FP6 INCO contributed to build scientific partnerships with Third Countries?
- How has FP6 INCO contributed to build a European Research Area (ERA) open to the World?
- What are presumably long-lasting societal impacts of INCO? Is any evidence already available for that?
- What are effective mechanisms that can be devised to support EU external relations and Development cooperation at the policy and programme level?

² Available from DG RTD, Directorate D: International Co-operation
Unit D-3: Specific International Co-operation Activities

- What are main lessons to strengthen communication of results and achievements of INCO activities under FP6, to increase its impact and provide recommendations for international cooperation within FP7?

In the evaluation framework the above questions have been reformulated and sorted into evaluation criteria in order to distinguish questions and criteria as well as to comply with EC practice in evaluation (see annex 1.2):

- **Effectiveness:** Which are the programme's main achievements and results with regards to objectives?
- **Complementarity/Synergy:** How does INCO fit in and contribute to other EU policies in research and external relations?
- **Added value:** Where have specific measures for international cooperation made a difference, and how?

1.2 Outline of report

- In section 2 a brief presentation of International Research Cooperation in general and FP6 INCO in particular is described, with the intervention logic of the INCO programme.
- In sections 3, 4 and 5 findings pertaining to Strengthening research capacities, Addressing third countries needs, and Support of EC foreign policy are presented.
- Finally, in section 6 the evaluators draw the main conclusions of the analysis, answering the questions set by the Commission while highlighting the added value of INCO and lessons learned for international cooperation under FP7.

2. Background and intervention logic of FP6 INCO

The two overall strategic objectives of FP6 were to strengthen the scientific and technological bases of industry and to encourage its international competitiveness, by promoting research activities in line with other EU policies. These objectives can be achieved, for instance, by supporting projects which provide European researchers and industries access to knowledge fabrics in other parts of the world. Secondly, the collaborative projects also aimed to address identified societal problems and focus on generating and sharing scientific knowledge with a potential to providing solutions to those issues.

In other words, INCO had a dual mandate with scientific objectives geared at problem solving and institutional objectives geared at ensuring access of European researchers and companies to knowledge fabrics in other parts of the world, while also reinforcing research capacities and partnerships in and with partner countries.

Under FP6 (2002-2006) more generally, international S&T cooperation followed three major routes:

- The General opening of the thematic priorities to international cooperation in pursuit of the European interest (Euro 285 million included in the budgets of the priorities)
- Specific measures in support of international cooperation (INCO) addressing research needs in the specific socioeconomic context of partner regions and based on mutual interest and benefits (Euro 315 million allocated)
- International Marie Curie Actions.

This assessment focuses on specific international S&T cooperation under the Specific measures in support of international cooperation, the INCO Programme in FP6 (Priority 8), which combined policy activities with collaborative research and sought links with other international partners and their activities.

2.1 Setup and scope of the FP6 INCO Programme

The following regions were distinguished according to similar specificities and reflect those in the priority areas for research cooperation:

- INCO-DEV; Developing Countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America
- INCO-MPC; Mediterranean Partner Countries located in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean
- INCO-NIS; Russia and the other New Independent States³
- INCO-WBC; Western Balkan Countries

- INCO-ACC; Accession Countries
- Countries with which an S&T Cooperation Agreement has been concluded or is under negotiation.

The three instruments used were: Specific Targeted Research Projects (STREPs), Coordination Actions (CA) and Specific Support Actions (SSA).

- STREPs were to provide answers to European competitiveness challenges and meet the needs of society and the community in the targeted geographical areas.
- CA were concerned with the networking and coordination of research and innovation actions
- SSA supported the implementation of FP6 INCO and Thematic Priorities, contributing to the preparation of future framework programmes and stimulating, encouraging and facilitating cooperation

The instruments' eligibility criteria vary, thus affecting the composition of applicants. Minimum participation requirements for STREPs were: three partners from three different EU Member States or Associated States, of which two must be Member States or Associated Candidate Countries plus three partners from one of the above INCO partner regions (except Mediterranean, where only two partners are required). The same requirements applied to the CAs. On the other hand, SSAs could be implemented by a single legal entity. Large partnerships or the mobilisation of multiple partners, with or without formal contractualisation, were however not uncommon. Further, SSAs were open to participation of entities solely from non-associated third countries.

The instruments have been implemented in the following broad areas of research:

- A. DEV: Health and public health; Rational use of natural resources; Food security;
 - B. MPC: Environment (including policy relevant water research, water, renewable energy and water efficiency in agriculture); Protection and conservation of cultural heritage; Health;
 - C. WBC: Stabilise and reinforce WBC research potential and contribution to sustainable research development: Environment and Health
 - D. Russia and the other NIS: increase research potential and tackle problems of mutual interest: Environmental protection; Adjusting the system of industrial production and communication; Health protection; and financial support to INTAS activities;
- Multilateral co-ordination of national RTD policies and activities.

³ Most of the resources allocated for this region were managed by INTAS.

These broad areas were identified in the Council Decision on FP6. The articulation of specific topics for calls for proposals were derived principally from international commitments of the European Union and S&T policy dialogue with partner regions.

Legal entities from all countries in the formally established INCO list of countries were eligible for funds from FP6.

In order to stimulate competition in the calls for proposals, research themes were deliberately maintained broad.

The evaluation criteria were broadly similar throughout FP6 but INCO applied a two-step evaluation procedure to ensure rigorous selection taking into account the particular challenges and opportunities of international cooperation. The regional dimension of FP6 INCO has been reflected in the selection process of projects. STREP and CA proposals were evaluated in two stages to determine their relevance to the programme:

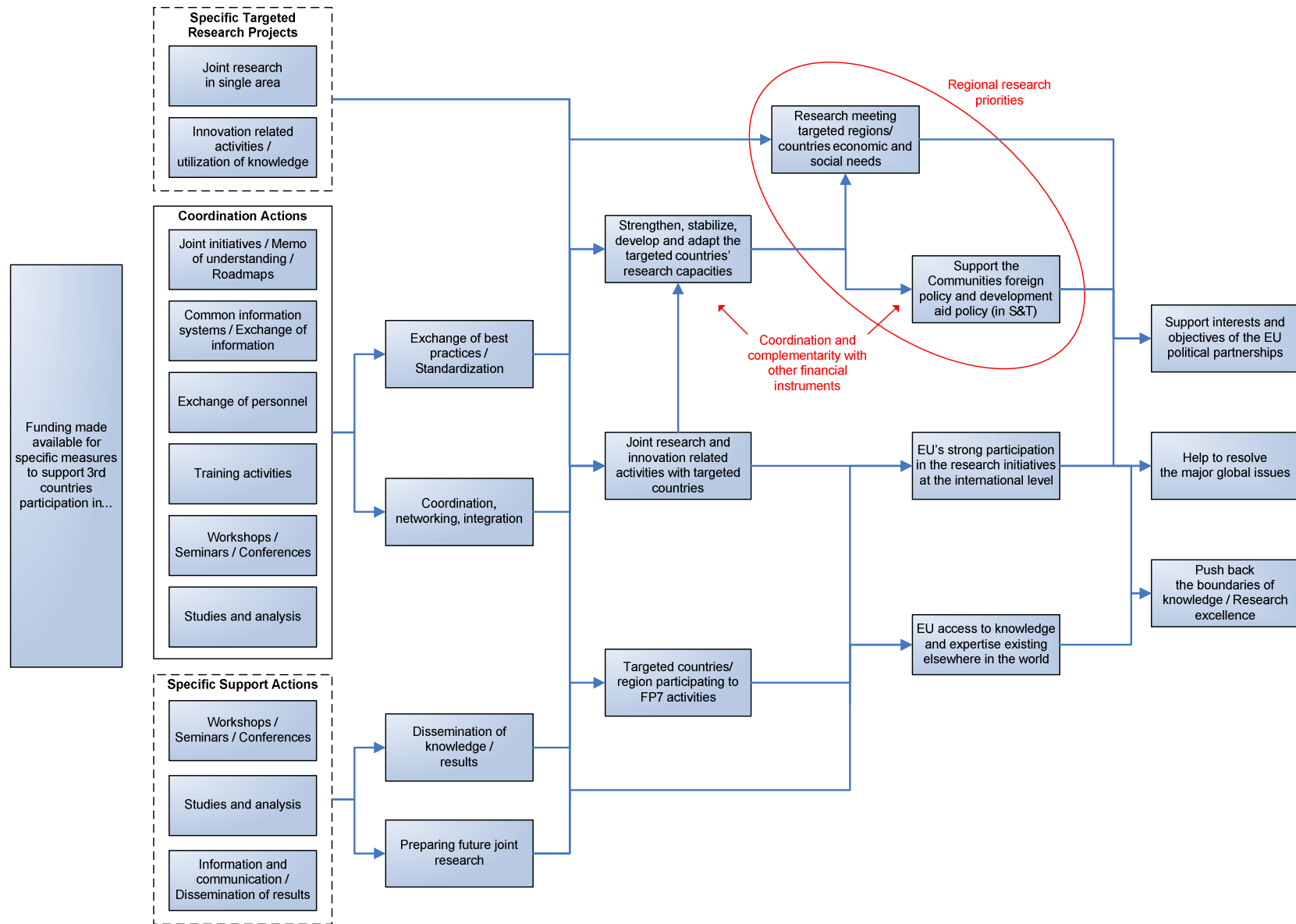
- Step 1: Scientific evaluation - This step examined all relevant criteria and in particular the scientific and technical quality of the proposal for STREPs or quality of co-ordination for CAs.
- Step 2: Regional evaluation - This step concerned the evaluation of the relevance of the proposal to the specific problems of the target countries, the possible impact of the results in the regions concerned, as well as the balance and quality of the partnership both within the consortium and with regard to management.

Only proposals having met all thresholds of both scientific and regional evaluation could be considered for financing, subject to availability of funds. SSAs were however evaluated in a single step.

2.2 **Intervention logic of FP6 INCO**

A schematic overview of INCO's intervention logic is presented below, as well as the instruments used to achieve the programme's objectives.

Figure 1 Intervention logic of FP6 INCO



As can be seen from figure 1, **the objectives** of FP6 INCO can be divided into two types:

1. On the one hand, the intervention logic is research driven and targets the following: consolidating international research networks, creating knowledge, and addressing regional needs and global issues.
2. On the other hand, INCO is also designed to contribute to other policy areas, in order to "pave the way" for other interventions and development initiatives, where possible and relevant, thus complementing the EU's foreign policy instruments and objectives.

All in all, the regional dimension of FP6 INCO was an important feature of the programme. INCO's specific measures addressed priority themes, relevant to some groups of countries or regions, and which had not been addressed by the seven thematic priorities of the FP. By targeting the needs of Third Countries, these specific international cooperation activities have supported the Community's external relations and development aid policies, such as the EU water initiatives and the EU's commitment to fight poverty and towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

3. Strengthening research capacities (effectiveness)

The analysis of the intervention logic, as presented above in figure 1, shows that one of the cross-cutting objectives of the INCO programme was to strengthen the targeted countries research capacities, including an increase in their participation in the Framework Programme to Research and Technological Development, in cooperation with EU partners. In what follows, the evaluators analyse to what extent the INCO programme actually achieved high quality participation of INCO targeted countries⁴ in the Framework Programme.

3.1 Increased and improved participation of INCO targeted countries in projects

In INCO, the participation of partner countries was compulsory: For STREPs (Specific Targeted Research Project) and CAs (Coordination Actions), the participation of a minimum of 3 from INCO targeted countries and regions was required, while in SSAs (Specific Support Actions) a single entity from INCO targeted countries or the EU or an associated country was sufficient. Furthermore, a balanced participation of EU and non EU countries participants in projects was a criterion in selecting projects.

3.1.1 INCO had a significant impact on INCO countries' participation in FP6

The implementation of INCO amounted to €309.9 million (not including INTAS) invested in 387 projects and mobilizing 2,729 participations (1303 or 48% of which from INCO countries). The distribution between instruments has been as shown in table below.

Table 1 Instruments used FP 6 INCO

Instruments	# of projects	% of projects	of Budget	% of budget
STREP	144	37%	222.3	72%
SSA	220	57%	64.8	21%
CA	23	6%	22.8	7%
TOTAL	386	100%	309.9	100%

Beyond these basic figures, statistical analyses and survey results indicate strong achievements in terms of Third countries participation. In terms of budget, €133.2

⁴ Further in the report, "INCO targeted countries" or "INCO countries" refer to Third Countries targeted by the INCO programmes, basically countries that are not Member States or Associated States to the Framework Programme or industrialised countries. INCO countries include Developing countries, Mediterranean Partner countries, Western Balkan Countries or Russia and the New Independent States, as defined at the time of FP6. A broader definition of INCO countries can include Accession candidate countries: In that case, the denomination "partner countries" is generally used.

million were allocated to participants from INCO targeted regions; which represents 43% of the whole INCO budget.

A comparison with the thematic priorities shows that with a budget 14 times smaller than the Thematic Priorities (€309.9 million versus €4,214.1 million):

- INCO's financial contribution to INCO countries represents about 70% of the Thematic Priorities' financial contribution to Third countries (€133.2 million in INCO vs. €181.8 million in the TP)
- The number of INCO participations from INCO countries represents about 65% of the number of TP participations from INCO countries (1,303 participations from INCO countries in INCO vs. 2,019 in the TP)

3.1.2 **An evenly distributed budget between INCO and EU participants**

As mentioned above, 43% of the INCO budget went directly to participants from INCO countries, compared to 4% in FP6 Thematic Priorities. The remaining 47% of the INCO budget went to EU participants and 10% to Associated Countries⁵.

The budget distribution per call indicates that Western Balkan Countries (66%) and Accession Candidate Countries (80%) received the highest ratio. This is accounted for by the nature of the objectives of the calls, mainly capacity-building and, as far as the Western Balkans are concerned, post-conflict rehabilitation in the field of research⁶.

On average, each participant from INCO countries received more funding under INCO (€102,000 on average per participant from INCO countries) than under the Thematic Priorities (€90,000).

That almost half of the budget was allocated and went directly to INCO participating countries show that the participants were actively involved in the projects. Taking into account differences in costs and wages in Europe and in developing countries, it seems likely that INCO countries' contribution in resources to projects was higher than EU countries' contribution.

3.1.3 **INCO achieved a balanced cooperation in projects**

The number of projects coordinated by participants from INCO countries is also a good indicator of their degree of involvement in projects and the programme. Database calculations indicate that 58 projects (15%) in FP6 INCO were coordinated by participants from INCO countries, compared to 4 projects under the Thematic Priorities⁷. This indicates that ownership among INCO projects has been stronger than in Thematic Priorities, although it should be noted that the majority of projects with Third country coordinators were SSAs which did not require a partnership.

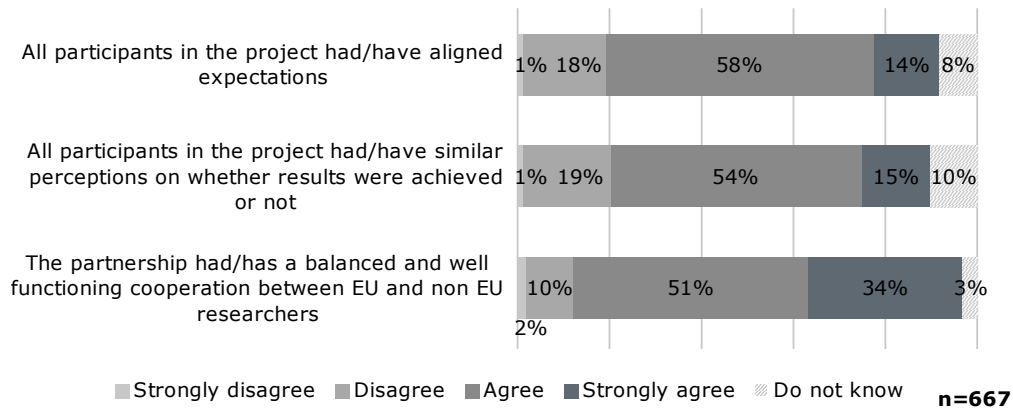
⁵ Annex 4, Table 66 Budget distribution per country group

⁶ Annex 4, Table 64 Budget distribution to partner countries per Call

⁷ Annex 4, Table 67 Number of project coordinated per country group

The survey results show that project participants considered cooperation within the projects as well functioning and balanced. Answers from INCO countries and EU countries participants are homogeneous, further sustaining the results of the questionnaire in terms of aligned expectations and collaboration⁸.

Figure 2 INCO projects_Q7_Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statements on your EU-funded project:



Comparing answers from INCO participants with answers from participants to Thematic Priorities, results tend to show that the partnerships between EU and non-EU researchers were more balanced and functioned better in the INCO programme⁹.

3.1.4 Impact on the diversity in countries participation

In total, INCO enabled the participation of partners from 91 different INCO targeted countries, while the Thematic Priorities involved participants from 92 different countries. An analysis of the "top 20" participant countries in INCO and in the Thematic Priorities shows that INCO had an impact on the hierarchy of participant countries by enabling a stronger involvement of Mediterranean Partner Countries, as well as Central African Countries. In all 23 % of INCO participants were from the Mediterranean region (Jordan being the 7th most involved country, followed by Algeria at the 9th position and Lebanon at the 11th)¹⁰.

⁸ Annex 3.3, Table 31 INCO projects_Q7_Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statements on your EU-funded project:

⁹ See Annex 3.3, Table 32 INCO/TP projects_Q7_Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statements on your EU-funded project

¹⁰ Annex 5, Table 69 Comparison of the top-20 INCO participating countries (number of participants)

Main conclusions on INCO country participation:

- With a budget 14 times smaller than the Thematic Priorities, INCO enabled the participation of a number of INCO targeted countries which represent 65% of the total number of participants from INCO countries in the FP6 Thematic Priorities.
- The degree of involvement of INCO targeted participants in the projects was high, thus enabling a more balanced cooperation between the EU and non-EU participants.
- There were no major differences between INCO and Thematic Priorities, in terms of which countries were involved. Yet, FP6 INCO enabled a stronger involvement of Mediterranean Partner Countries.

3.2 **Strengthening research networks and facilitating access to knowledge and capacities**

Project participants' self assessment indicated that opinions on the contribution of INCO to strengthened capacities and knowledge were overwhelmingly positive¹¹. When analysing answers from INCO targeted countries only, the project's achievements are assessed more positively by participants in the INCO programme than by participants in the Thematic Priorities, especially with regards to networks, and access to knowledge and facilities¹².

Members of the Advisory Group and members of the Programme Committee mention network building and access to knowledge and capacity development as the main achievements of the INCO programme, as presented in table below:

¹¹ Annex 3.2, Figure 20 INCO projects_Q6_According to you, your project has clearly led/will clearly lead to...

¹² Annex 3.5, Table 50 INCO/TP projects_Q6_According to you, your project has clearly led/will clearly lead to...

Table 2 NCP/AG/PC_Q6_According to you, what were the main three results achieved by the FP6 INCO Programme, in order of importance (open fields, n=54)?

	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Total	%
Development networks, contacts etc.	11	14	5	30	32%
Access to knowledge/ research/ capacity development for partner countries	7	7	10	24	26%
Facilitated access to FPs for partner countries	7	2	4	13	14%
Improved research quality (joint)	3	6	3	12	13%
Access to knowledge/ research for the EU	4	3	3	10	11%
Coherence with other policies	0	0	2	2	2%
Research policy development	0	0	2	2	2%
Increased regional cooperation	1	0	0	1	1%

The rapid outcome assessment's results show that projects supported network building and access to knowledge and expertise to a high extent¹³, with information, dissemination and communication being the main activities. In the assessed projects most of the knowledge and expertise has been transferred by seminars and information systems, for example the 60 projects assessed had organised 126 seminars and conferences, on 288 occasions participants in projects had attended seminars and conferences, whilst a total of 256 presentations to stakeholders and decision-makers had been reported. The analysis of project output also shows that a mere 4 projects, equalling to 7 % of the sample, included exchange of personnel, scholars or alike¹⁴. However, it can be assumed that exchange has taken place through previously mentioned dissemination activities, and as such has given young researchers the opportunity of working in an international environment.

A closer look at intended outcome and impact shows that access to knowledge and improved capacities in carrying out research seldom were the main targeted objectives of the projects but were rather an underlying implicit result derived from cooperation projects in research¹⁵. The most frequently mentioned outcomes were further international cooperation in research (50 %) and sustainable networks between EU and Third countries researchers (47 %).

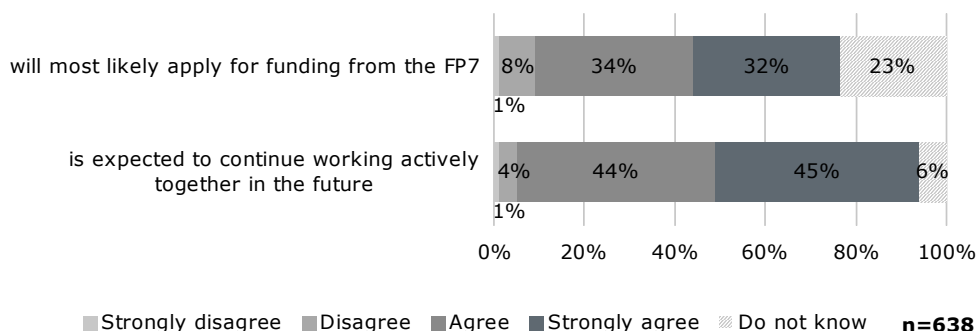
¹³ For a complete listing of outputs see Annex 7.2, Table 83 Projects outputs: All projects

¹⁴ As the reports do not state number of exchanges, it is not possible to assess the actual number of exchanges enabled by INCO.

¹⁵ Annexe 7.2, Table 86 Projects intended outcomes

Finally, it was interesting to see that project participants are rather optimistic on the sustainability of their partnership.

Figure 3 INCO projects_Q17_The partnership built under the project:



Main conclusions on strengthened research networks:

- Network development: INCO projects have enhanced cooperation between the EU and non-EU participants, as well as cooperation at a regional level, and have improved connection with research users.
- Capacity building: INCO enabled participants to develop capacities to participate to international research activities and to conducting research as such. INCO has facilitated access to knowledge and expertise available elsewhere.

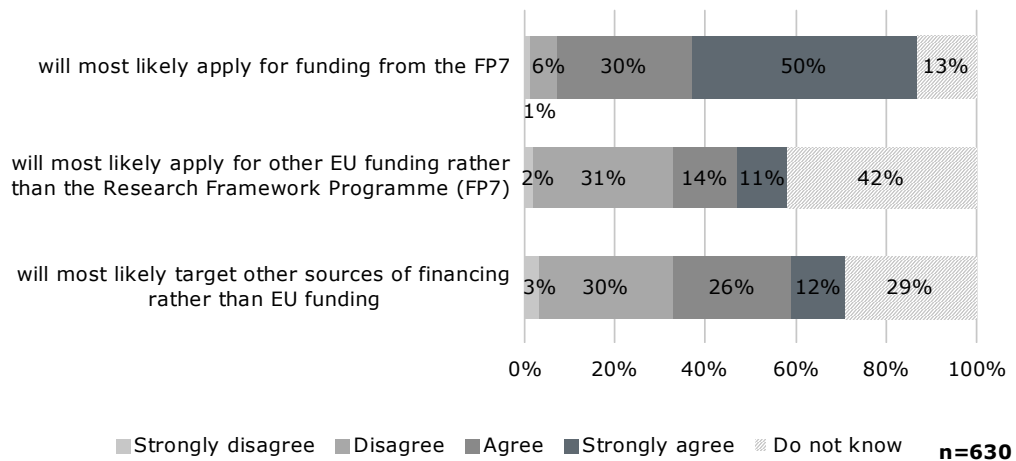
3.3 **Enhancing participation of INCO targeted countries to the Framework Programme and other international cooperation activities**

INCO had a clear positive impact on facilitating access to the EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development¹⁶, based on the assessment by both stakeholders (National Contact Points, members of the Advisory Group and members of the Programme Committee) and project participants.

¹⁶ Annex 2.2, Figure 5 NCP/AG/PC_Q5_According to you, FP6 INCO has clearly led to...

The survey results highlight the relatively high possibility that the partnership built under the project will apply to FP7¹⁷ as well as a strong interest from INCO projects participants to apply for funding from FP7:

Figure 4 INCO projects_Q15/16_You and your research team/organisation



The results of the projects analysis showed that future international research project activities were one of the main intended outcomes at project level¹⁸. To this end, a large number of INCO projects were specifically designed to enhance the participation of non-EU countries institutions to international cooperation in research.

Some data has been collated to measure the actual impact of INCO on the participation of INCO targeted countries to other activities of the Framework Programme. Firstly, participation from Third Countries in the FP6 Thematic Priorities has progressively increased both in number (Figure 5) and share of participants (table 3). This increase in Third Countries' participation is not correlated with the total number of participants in the Thematic Priorities which remained stable from 2004 to 2006. The extent to which this increase is due to INCO is difficult to measure. It could also be attributed to increased awareness of the opening of the framework programme to international cooperation.

¹⁷ Annex 3.2, Figure 30 INCO projects_Q17_The partnership built under the project:

¹⁸ Annex 7.2, Table 86 Projects intended outcomes

Figure 5 Evolution of the number of participants from INCO countries¹⁹

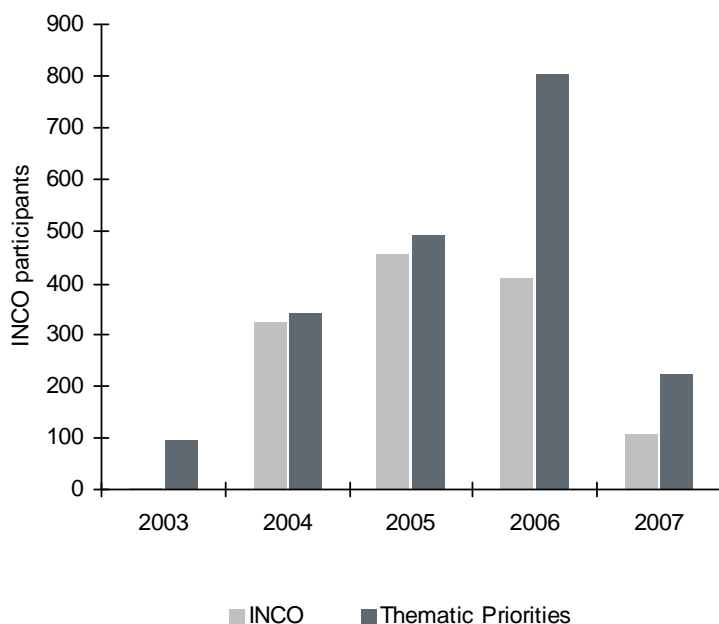


Table 3 Share of participants from INCO countries

		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
TP	INCO countries	96	340	494	804	225
		1.5%	2.0%	3.0%	4.5%	5.5%
	TOTAL	6430	16729	16424	17902	4056
INCO	INCO countries	3	323	458	413	107
		10.3%	38.0%	50.5%	53.8%	60.1%
	TOTAL	29	849	907	768	178

Second, a comparative analysis of the lists of participants from INCO countries in FP6 INCO, FP6 Thematic Priorities and FP7 Thematic Priorities (Cooperation Specific Programme) shows that in late may 2008²⁰:

- 20% of FP6 INCO participants from INCO targeted countries participated in FP6 Thematic Priorities
- 15% of FP6 INCO participants from INCO countries are participating in FP7

These figures are tentative, and further analysis would require a comparison with the percentage of budget engaged at the time when the list of Third countries partici-

¹⁹ These figures are based on the date of signature of the contract with the EC. INCO countries do not include Associated Countries. Missing information in the database accounts for discrepancies in the total number of participants.

²⁰ The analysis has been conducted based on the participant's acronyms.

pants in FP7 was retrieved from the database. However, figures tend to indicate a positive trend in the participation of INCO countries' participants in FP7.

Main conclusions on participation in international research cooperation:

- Survey results and project analyses show that FP6 INCO prepared participants for future international cooperation in research, and has most likely increased the possibility of participation in FP7.
- The number of participants from INCO countries in the Thematic Priorities has progressively increased but further investigation would be needed to assess the actual impact of FP6 INCO on INCO countries' participation in FP7.

3.4 Achieving research excellence

Research excellence is a strong aspect of the INCO programme's intervention logic, and it has not been the objective of this evaluation to assess research excellence. However, the evaluation question "which areas have proven that research excellence can be achieved only with Third country participation in research teams" does require the evaluators to look into the question of research excellence.

The assessment has been done mainly through opinions of internal and external stakeholders and participants as well as results of the rapid outcome assessment.

The general assessment of the quality of research under the INCO programme by both stakeholders (National Contact Points, Advisory Group and Programme Committee) and project participants has been positive²¹. However, when asked about INCO's three main achievements, National Contact Points, Advisory Group and Programme Committee mention "improved research quality" in 13% of cases, in second or third place in the hierarchy of achievements, and far behind network building (32%) and access to knowledge (26%)²². Compared to other achievements, self assessment by project partners in terms of research excellence remains highly positive, but slightly lower than other achievements²³.

Interviews with the Thematic Directorates in DG RTD show that INCO projects were perceived to be more management and coordination projects aimed at answering needs of third countries at a micro level. Given that the Thematic Directorates saw

²¹ Annexe 2.2, Figure 4 NCP/AG/PC_Q4_According to you, FP6 INCO has led to...

²² Annex 2.2, Table 6 NCP/AG/PC_Q6_According to you, what were the main three results achieved by the FP6 INCO Programme, in order of importance?

²³ Annex 3.2, Figure 20 INCO projects_Q6_According to you, your project has clearly led/will clearly lead to...

INCO projects as development cooperation, the programme was considered of little added value to the level of European Research to achieve research excellence. These perceptions illustrate well the dual nature of INCO, which was in effect to bridge research and development policies. It also illustrates the fact that Thematic Directorates in DG RTD had rather little insight in INCO and that the INCO programme was not seen as a completely integrated part of the FP6.

However, looking into INCO's output, as shown in Table 3, STREPs in particular produced actual research results. The frequency of outputs is high in all categories, except for patents. For example, out of the 60 assessed projects, 18 projects produced 103 articles published in peer reviewed journals (out of which the majority were STREPs, 13 projects and 75 articles).

Table 4 Mentioned outputs in projects final reports (rapid outcomes assessment)

		All projects (n=60)			STREPs only (n=18)		
		# projects	% projects	# of outputs	# projects	% projects	# of outputs
RTD outputs	RTD outputs (innovative methodology, software etc.)	17	28%	-	15	83%	-
	Protection of knowledge (patent)	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
Research and studies	Primary data collection and analysis	16	27%	-	15	83%	-
	Secondary data collection and analysis, benchmarking, mapping	40	67%	-	13	72%	-
Dissemination	Published articles in peer reviewed journal	18	30%	103	12	67%	75

A more qualitative analysis of the results of the rapid outcomes assessment shows that STREPs aimed, within applied research, to a large extent at transferring knowledge and tools as well as developing, testing and/or adapting methodologies to tackle identified problems in the targeted regions.

In the field of natural resources management for instance, several STREPS come to illustrate this aforementioned strategy and demonstrate how an advance in scientific understanding can support improvements in management practices and policy formulations which affect people and the environment in which they live.

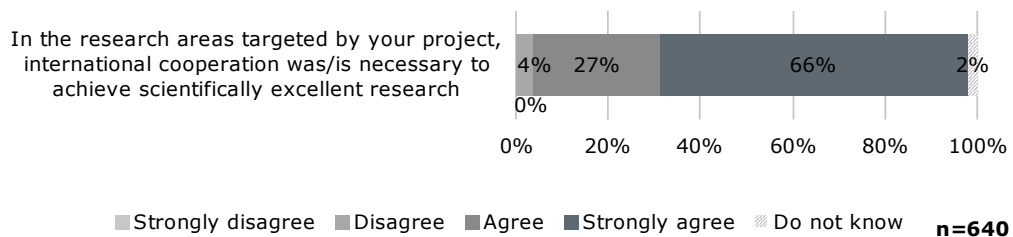
As an example, the WATERWEB (509163) project provided strategies for managing water resources in Western Balkan states by combining modern technologies from a river basin through to single plant, integrating environmental, socio-economic and health implications. A Land-Water-Economic Information System was to be created and used in 3 river basins to map local and regional water sources, sources of con-

taminated runoff, agricultural water use. This tool will support decision-making on the use of pesticides and on water management towards sustainable environment and health improvement

Another example is EPIC FORCE (510739), the aim of which was to improve the integrated management of forest and water resources at the river basin scale in four Latin American countries covering a range of humid forests and rainfall/snowmelt regimes with major flood and erosion problems combined with the lack of integrated water and forest policies. The project developed a model to assess the impact of management practices on basin response to extreme rainfall. Findings fed into strategies for integrated forest and water management relevant to extreme events and developed evidence-based policy recommendations for national agencies and donors.

It was generally acknowledged that international cooperation in research is necessary to achieve research excellence, and this is also the case in INCO and INCO research areas, as shown by the survey results:

Table 5 INCO projects_Q10_Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statements:



However, the results of the survey must be considered as somewhat biased, as all respondents have chosen to take part in international cooperation within their field.

The design of the INCO programme - based on a regional approach, compulsory participation of partners from developing or less developed countries, and pragmatic specific priorities targeting third countries needs - has been successful in producing knowledge and methodologies to tackle problems within the specified research areas. In particular STREPs have produced verifiable research results, in terms of publications.

Main conclusions on the level of research excellence:

- INCO projects involved applied research aimed at answering needs at a local level through the transfer of knowledge and tools, or the development/adaptation of methodologies. In this regard, STREPs produced good research results, in particular measured through publications in peer-reviewed journals
- "Research excellence", was positively assessed by directly involved stakeholders and project participants
- The Thematic Directorates in DG RTD perceived INCO as more development than research cooperation, showing a lack of awareness and integration of the INCO programme and projects in the overall FP6
- In enabling participants to gain experience in international cooperation in research, INCO provided a valuable contribution towards research excellence.
- It has not been possible to establish particular fields in which international cooperation is necessary to achieve scientific excellence.

4. Addressing Third Countries needs (effectiveness)

Meeting targeted regions/countries' economic and social needs was one of INCO's main objectives, as well as one of its main distinguishing characteristics within FP6.

4.1 Addressing regional needs through the INCO priorities

One of the strongest characteristics of FP6 INCO was in its priorities in research, which were distinct from the seven Thematic Priorities of FP6, targeting specific issues relevant to INCO regions and countries. The following section explores the relevance of the INCO priorities and the achievements of the INCO programme regarding these priorities.

4.1.1 Objectives relevant to and coherent with Third Country needs

INCO was designed to address priority themes of regional relevance. INCO priority research areas were health and public health, rational use of natural resources and food security. As geographical partner regions' development process and thus specific needs differ, INCO research priorities were also diversified to reflect differences in regional needs. In order to ensure the relevance of the priorities, these were discussed during bi-regional dialogues which consisted of a series of meetings with stakeholders. INCO priorities, defined in the Work Programmes, can be summarized as follows:²⁴

- A. DEV: Health and public health; Rational use of natural resources; Food security;
 - B. MPC: Environment (including policy relevant water research, water, renewable energy and water efficiency in agriculture); Protection and conservation of cultural heritage; Health;
 - C. WBC: Stabilise and reinforce WBC research potential and contribution to sustainable research development: Environment and Health
 - D. Russia and the other NIS: increase research potential and tackle problems of mutual interest: Environmental protection; Adjusting the system of industrial production and communication; Health protection; and financial support to INTAS activities;
- Multilateral co-ordination of national RTD policies and activities.

The transversal priorities of INCO, Health and Environment, as well as the specific priority for Developing countries, Food Security, reflect the Millennium Development

²⁴ The full list of priorities is in annex 11

Goals, as well as of the priorities of the "European Consensus on Development"²⁵, which is already an indication of their relevance to the needs of third countries and alignment with other priorities and commitments.

The desk research on regional strategies produced interesting results enabling to locate INCO within the broader area of EU external policies. For each INCO region, a number of regional strategy papers (RSP) were reviewed²⁶ showing a high degree of alignment between regional strategies and INCO priority themes²⁷.

4.1.2 **The level of achievement of INCO's priorities**

Relevance having been assessed positively, it is important to assess how much was actually achieved for each of the priorities of the INCO programme. The results of the project categorisation²⁸ show that areas mainly covered by the FP6 INCO budget were: Environment (43% of budget, including Water 18%) and then Health (28%), thereby reflecting the transversal dimension of these priorities, as well as their integration into MDGs' agenda and the European Consensus.

Analysing the budget distribution gives a good indication of the relevance of the EC contribution's to the needs identified. Grey areas indicate the priorities identified in the INCO work programmes for each region:

²⁵ 2006/C 46/01, Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy: 'The European Consensus'

²⁶ See annexe 8.1 Table 89 List of reviewed regional strategy papers.

²⁷ Annexe 8.2 Table 91 Overview of INCO priorities in the RSP: Level of priority

²⁸ For technical reasons, the information provided by the Corda database on the project's field was not reliable. The evaluators thus decided to categorize manually all 387 projects. See annexe 6.

Table 6 Budget distribution per thematic priority and region

Thematic area	DEV	MPC	WBC	Russia +NIS
Water	15%	41%	14%	7%
Energy	1%	21%	23%	1%
Other Environment	23%	1%	19%	60%
<i>ST Environment</i>	40%	63%	56%	69%
Food security	11%	5%	0%	0%
Post-conflict trauma	0%	1%	12%	0%
Health and disease	49%	6%	4%	3%
<i>ST Health</i>	49%	7%	16%	3%
Protection and conservation of cultural heritage	0%	25%	0%	0%
Communication networks	0%	0%	2%	1%
Other research areas	0%	0%	7%	0%
Competitiveness and innovation in the industry	0%	0%	0%	24%
Capacity building in research ²⁹	0%	0%	19%	3%
TOTAL (M EUR)	157.9	67.7	27.2	17.1

The table above shows that regional priorities were adequately addressed in all of the INCO regions. However, two loopholes could be identified: In the Russia+other NIS region, the budget was concentrated on Environment and the share of the budget allocated to Health and Communication Networks (ICT) was rather small. In Mediterranean Partner Countries, the budget allocated to Health was also proportionally smaller compared to Water, Energy and Cultural Heritage.

Main conclusions on addressing the needs:

- INCO priorities were relevant to the needs of the targeted regions: INCO priorities have been coherent with regional needs and priorities identified in the EU Regional Strategy Papers, which are negotiated and co-signed with intergovernmental regional organisations.
- The budget distribution per region and INCO priority shows that needs have been adequately addressed.

²⁹ The call FP6-2002-INCO-COMultilatRTD/SSA-5 and FP6-2004-TC-SSA-General which are transversal to all INCO regions are not included in this table.

4.2 The strong development cooperation dimension of the projects

INCO's objective to meet Third countries needs has been realised as INCO projects' outcomes have demonstrated. The analysis of the projects' intended outcomes showed that³⁰:

- 37% of mentioned intended outcomes aimed to benefit both EU and non-EU partners
- 63% of mentioned intended outcomes aimed to benefit non-EU participants only
- no project mentions EU member states as the sole beneficiaries of any of the categories of outcomes

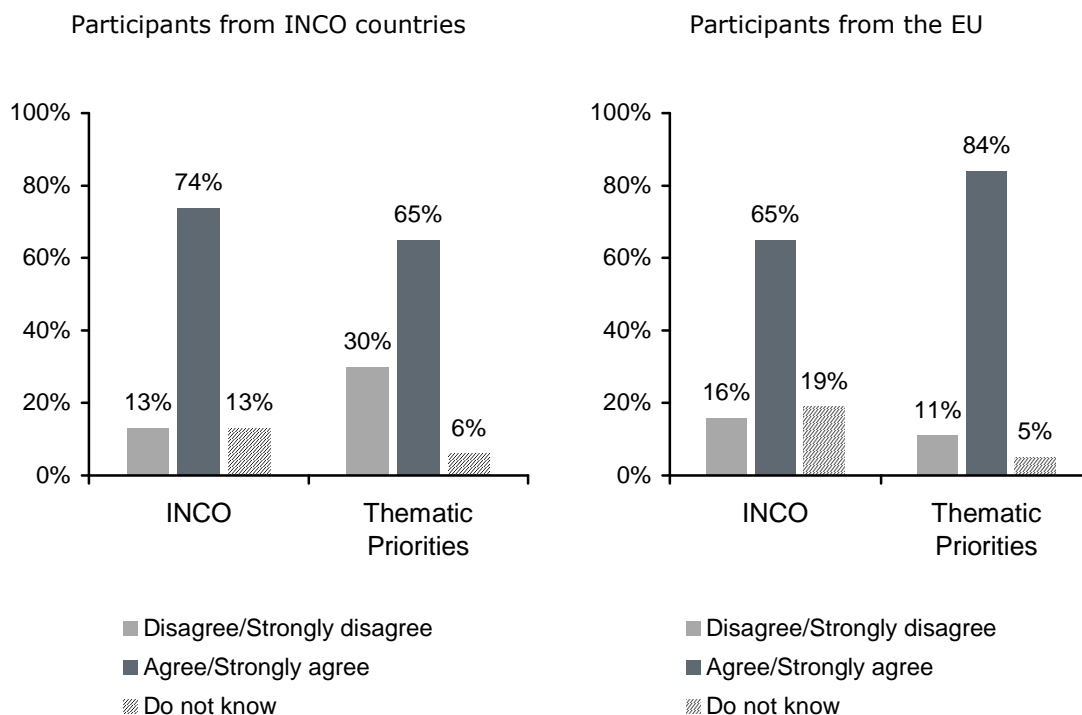
Shared outcomes were mentioned, such as "sustainable improved access to scientific knowledge"; "sustainable inter-connection between EU and Third country research networks"; "regional or international policy dialogue improved". Other outcomes were mainly targeted at the participants from INCO countries, for example capacity building related outcomes were intended to benefit partners from Third countries in more than 85% of the cases. Such capacity building may also prepare them for participation in the international 'opening' part of the FP7.

Broader impacts on other policies, on society and on the economy were clearly related to INCO targeted countries' challenges and needs, and it has been possible to identify an intended outcome related to "impact on other policies, society, and economy" in 70% of projects. All this illustrates the close relation between projects and third countries' social, economic or environmental needs.

Project participants' opinions on the uptake and use made of results to improve the level of effectiveness of practices to tackle problems in targeted research areas or regions, were highly positive. This further highlights the strong development cooperation dimension of the projects.

³⁰ The final reports of 60 out of 387 projects have been analysed. For the sake of the solidity of the results, all outcomes are analysed as intended since, based on project reports, it would not be possible to assess in an accurate manner whether outcomes were intended, likely or confirmed.

Figure 6 INCO Projects_Q9_According to you, your project has contributed to the take up and use of research results in more effective practices to tackle problems in targeted research areas/regions (n= INCO 276, TP 34; n = INCO (EU) 266, TP 83)



Interestingly, participants from INCO countries have assessed the statement more positively than participants in the Thematic Priorities; whilst participants from the EU assessed the uptake of results more likely under the Thematic Priorities than under INCO. This difference may not be statistically significant, yet the generally high percentages indicate that participants from both Europe and Third countries tend to have high expectation of impact.

The analysis of open answers provides an explanation and highlights the strong development cooperation dimension of the INCO projects further. Respondents have provided further details on how the projects results directly related to local needs, providing, or been expected to provide, practical answers, through dialogue and co-ordination, transfer, development, testing of methodologies, tools, practices etc, to local issues pertaining to health, farming, energy or water, confirming that achieving impact through the public investment is not only important during the evaluation process but remains a major concern during implementation.

It should also be noted that what is currently perceived to benefit the EU and/or participating countries, can shift with perspective and time. For example, the main impact of projects tackling deforestation is first and foremost local yet deforestation is also a global problem contributing to climate change, the loss of biodiversity, the erosion of farmland etc, also impacting the EU.

Main conclusions on intended outcomes:

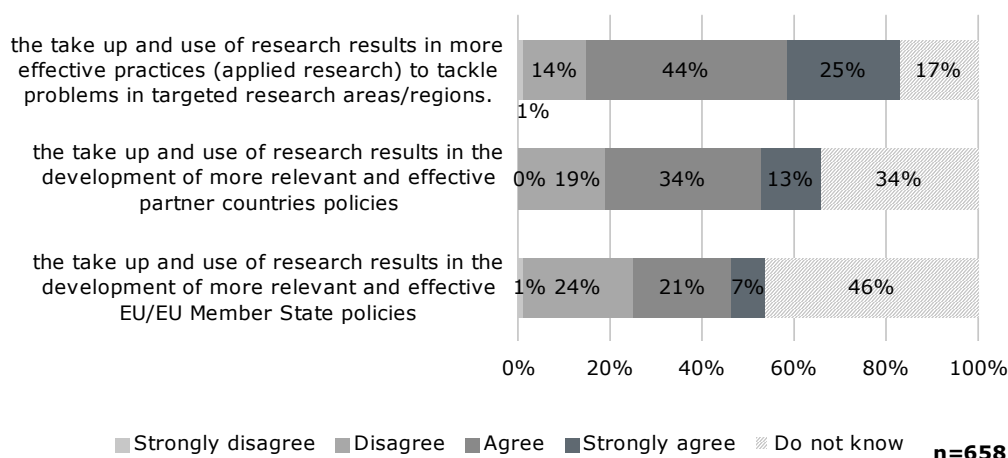
- INCO projects' outcomes mainly benefit, or were expected to mainly benefit, Third countries rather than EU countries, either at the level of participating research organisations, research and innovation policies and systems, or other policy, social and economic areas relevant also for meeting the EU's external policy objectives.
- Projects were closely related to partner countries' social, economic or environmental needs, and aim to improve the understanding and practices to tackle local or regional problems.
- Projects were considered to have contributed effectively to meeting the needs of INCO targeted country
- INCO research also targeted problems which can be expected to contribute to sustainable development globally (and thus also in the EU).

4.3 **Expectations on the uptake of results and their potential effects at policy level**

An important objective for INCO on an overall level was the contribution of the programme to improved policy development at EU level as well as partner country level. Expected impact on policies has been approached in the previous section, but policy uptake refers to a more systematic use of results at a national or regional level, implying overarching decisions in the way to tackle problems addressed by INCO priorities.

Results from the survey showed that respondents from all categories were quite sceptical as to how much was achieved at the policy level. Both INCO projects participants and stakeholders expressed uncertainty regarding policy influence and development, especially compared to the up-take of results in practices.

Figure 7 INCO projects_Q9_According to you, your project has contributed to:



The analysis of the answers to open questions show that examples of uptake of results in partner countries’ policies are quite weak, and in more than half of the cases, declared uptake can not be confirmed.

It is not surprising that project leaders have difficulties assessing possible policy impacts of the work undertaken, particularly at EU level/EU country policies, since these processes take place in other settings than the research or cooperation activities (which is also manifested by a full 59% of INCO country respondents stating that they do not know whether EU/EU member state policies take up/use the research results). However, it is a general tendency within all groups of respondents that fewer INCO project participants agree to have had an impact on the take-up and use in policy than TP project participants. It is difficult to assess the reasons for these answers; however, it may be due to the closer relationship between TP projects and EU internal priorities/policies thus enabling a more direct link and uptake in EU policy. Another explanation lies in the difficulty to reach the critical mass of projects and projects results in INCO countries due to a very small budget compared to the huge demand, its dispersion and less advanced research policies in partner countries.

It has been an aim of the INCO programme to secure broad stakeholder involvement in research partnerships, in order to reach beyond the research community and enable dissemination of research results and knowledge at policy level. Survey results on the level of stakeholders’ involvement and dissemination of results do not provide a clear picture: participants make a positive assessment of the results in terms of dissemination, while recognising less success in achieving media coverage and attention from the civil society/public; stakeholders seem to be more hesitant, though not

necessarily negative, to assume that the projects managed to reach out beyond the research community³¹.

An analysis of the projects documents and the answers to open question on the uptake of results indicate an effort to involve stakeholders and decision makers in the projects. More than half of the projects analysed have included a presentation to stakeholders and decision makers, both from the specific policy domain, and the larger technical and scientific community, as well as, to a lesser extent, the private sector. The policy domain was also a target in one fourth of the conferences, seminars and workshops organised. However, the primary target of the dissemination activities remained the scientific community: it represented about 60% of target groups mentioned in the project reports, while the policy domain represented about 10% of the targets groups mentioned in the reports³².

Despite some efforts to disseminate results at a policy level, the general impression remains that projects participants and stakeholders assess the uptake of results at policy level prudently. This could reflect the lack of operational mechanisms in Third countries to ensure continuous dialogue between policy/decision- makers and researchers. The implementation of results would then require a “push” maybe from the EU. However, the next section indicated that such mechanisms did not exist at the time of FP6 INCO.

Main conclusions on policy uptake:

- Despite some good results identified in projects activities, participants and stakeholders seem to be prudent regarding the effective uptake of these results at the policy level.
- When reported as likely or confirmed, the use of results at a policy level relates to a high extent to the development of policies in S&T international cooperation
- Little evidence exists at this stage regarding the use of results in other policies domains.

³¹ Annex 2.2, Figure 7 NCP/AG/PC_Q7_Do you agree to the following statements...

Annex 3.2, Figure 22 INCO PROJECTS_Q8_According to you, the project succeeded in...

³² Annexe 7, Table 87 Potential targets of the dissemination activities

5. Supporting the Community’s research policies and development cooperation policies (complementarity)

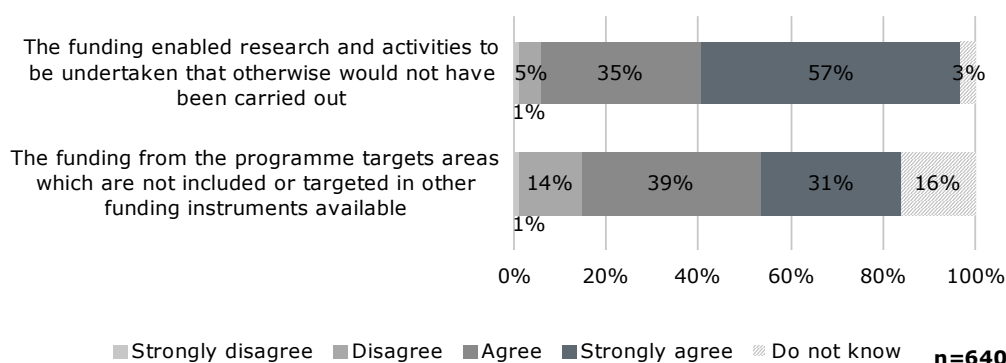
Supporting the Community’s foreign policy and development aid policy, and the interests and objectives of the EU international political partnerships, were two overall objectives identified by the intervention logic analysis of INCO. Thus, this section analyses the level of complementarity of INCO with the EU’s science and technology international policy on the one hand, and with the EU foreign policy and development aid policy on the other.

5.1 Supporting internationalisation of the Thematic Priorities

FP6 INCO filled a gap and ensured a smooth transition by enabling a higher participation from Third countries in FP6 and preparing research organisations and systems to participate in FP7. In this sense complementarity was achieved, and INCO priorities addressed research needs in the specific socioeconomic context of partner regions. These priorities were sharply different from the Thematic Priorities in FP6, and did not overlap.

Furthermore, INCO targeted activities that were not funded under the Thematic Priorities, such as reinforcement of research capacities, coordination of national RTD policies and activities, strengthening of cooperation with other foreign policy instruments and the definition of research priorities³³. The survey results showed that project participants agree on the fact that both the targeted areas and to a higher extent, the type of activities, were not funded by other instruments:

Figure 7 INCO projects_Q10_Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statements:



³³ This kind of activities was horizontal in INCO projects. A few calls focused specifically on these priorities: FP6-2004-ACC-SSA-2, FP6-2002-INCO-COMultilatRTD/SSA-5, FP6-2004-TC-SSA-General, FP6-2004-INCO-WBC/SSA-3 and FP6-2005-INCO-WBC/SSA-3.

As suggested by the survey results, some connections with the Thematic Priorities can be traced, especially with "Food quality and safety" (particularly in the fields of production methods and processes) "Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems" (renewable energy, natural resources etc.) and "Life science, genomics, and biotechnology for health" (infectious diseases). Mechanisms to ensure avoiding double funding were in place in the evaluation and selection of proposals. However, there were no mechanisms to ensure synergy between projects through a close monitoring of INCO projects by the thematic directorate.

Due to its dual mandate, INCO objectives diverged somewhat from the leitmotiv of research excellence as perceived by the Thematic Directorates within DG RTD. Interviews with members of the European Commission revealed a lack of ownership of the INCO programme in the Thematic Directorates, and the INCO programme was regarded as weakly connected to both the Thematic Priorities.

Instruments to ensure complementarity and synergy between INCO and the Thematic Priorities existed but were rather limited. Only very few indications of complementarity between projects in INCO and the TPs have been found³⁴.

An important role was filled by science counsellors, members of DG RTD in EC delegations, in linking projects, facilitating exchanges of experience and the up-take of results when it was possible. Those counsellors are however present only in the few INCO targeted countries which have an S&T agreement with the EU³⁵.

Complementarity needs a well defined political framework covering one region or one area. An example is The EU Water Initiative, which provided such a framework, dividing the work between INCO and the Thematic Priorities to achieve a common objective and involving development cooperation activities at EC and Member State level: in this context, both INCO and the Thematic Priority "Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems" funded projects in the field of water in order to support the Initiative, which provided a common platform for communication and dissemination in return.

³⁴ Very few INCO projects reviewed as part of the rapid outcomes assessment mention links with TP projects, usually as follow up activities of other FP projects. The evaluator has identified 3 projects out of 60 referring to other projects under the Thematic Priorities.

³⁵ Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Russia, the USA and Israel

Main conclusions on complementarity:

- As a specific programme for international cooperation in research, INCO complemented the Thematic Priorities, in internationalising the FP6 and preparing for FP7.
- Mechanisms to support complementarity between INCO and the Thematic Priorities at the operational level were rather weak and few synergies between projects could be identified, with some exception such as the EU Water Initiative.

5.2 Supporting the EU external and development aid policies

Aside from indicating a good level of coherence between INCO priorities and the priorities set in the RSP, the desk research on regional strategies produced further interesting results to locate research within the broader area of EU external policies³⁶:

In all regions, the strategy paper mentions support to research as a priority, albeit in different levels of importance. At a strategy level, however, research does not seem to be considered to high extent as a mean to address challenges. Environment is an exception and, in developing countries, food security, mainly related to health of livestock populations. This is a regional overview however, and differences can be identified at the sub-regional and national levels. In the DEV region, for instance, health is a research priority in Latin American and the Caribbean. With regards Environment, managing humid and semi-humid ecosystems is a research priority in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the Pacific, reconciling multiple demands on coastal zone³⁷.

Interviews within DG RELEX, DEV and AIDCO have shown that research is not a high priority in the policies they design and implement. Within units of DGs RELEX/DEV in charge of the policy dialogue with Third Countries, economic and trade issues are high in the agenda, and research is barely taken into account as a priority *per se* in national strategies. When in place, however, S&T cooperation agreements are said to be fully integrated with national strategies, and steering committees provide a common platform of dialogue to both DGs RELEX/DEV and DG RTD. Science and Technology can also be supportive for sectoral issues. In AIDCO, development aid instruments barely fund research activities and deal more directly with capacity building in policies and systems, as well as in service provision. Thematic programmes' priorities, however, were in line with INCO priorities, especially in the field of environment and the management of natural resources, agriculture and food security, and health.

³⁶ Annex 8.2

³⁷ See detailed results in annex 6.3

All in all, complementarity has been achieved: INCO priorities were aligned with those of external policies and filled a gap in dealing with research, a tool generally not taken into account by other policies to tackle identified challenges.

5.2.1 **Making complementarity and synergy happen**

Interviews conducted within the European Commission gave the overall impression that communication on the INCO programme and projects within the Commission was scarce, and awareness of the programme achievements generally weak. There were some examples of units which had built strong contacts with DG RTD and INCO projects³⁸, but this was usually conditional of personal interest or specific expertise, rather than the result of systematic mechanisms. Relevant people in each directorate were difficult to identify for the interviews.

The picture within EC delegations in Third countries is not better. With the exception of some countries which have entered an S&T agreement with the EU, and particularly where a research counsellor representing DG RTD exists, nobody was in charge of research in EC delegations. Rather sectoral officers in the operation section may have had some mandate in research. Unfortunately, during FP6, these people were not identified and a list of contact persons for research issues lacked. This of course rendered communication difficult and most of the people in the field reported not being informed of the INCO programme.

Contacts with delegations were actually a good opportunity for sector officers, and even heads of delegations, to ask for more and more systematic information from DG RTD, in order to follow-up projects, support the uptake of results and communicate on the achievements. In this regard, DG ENV and the Life Programme were mentioned as a good practice: EC delegations were consulted in the course of the selection process of projects and informed when a project involving the country was selected.

Under such circumstances, as people in the field were not aware of INCO activities, whilst synergy between projects may have occurred, no mechanisms were in place to ensure that it actually happened and/or to identify synergy.

In their answers to the survey, 8% of the project participants declared they have been in contact and received support from the EC delegations, and 42% declared they received support from other participants to EU funded projects³⁹. About 60% of the respondents stated they have been cooperating with other INCO projects, and about 45% cooperated and exchanged experience with other development cooperation projects⁴⁰. The analysis of open comments shows that project participants

³⁸ For instance, DG AIDCO was observer in the PAEPARD project, a joint African – European platform for agricultural research for development funded by FP6 INCO as a SSA.

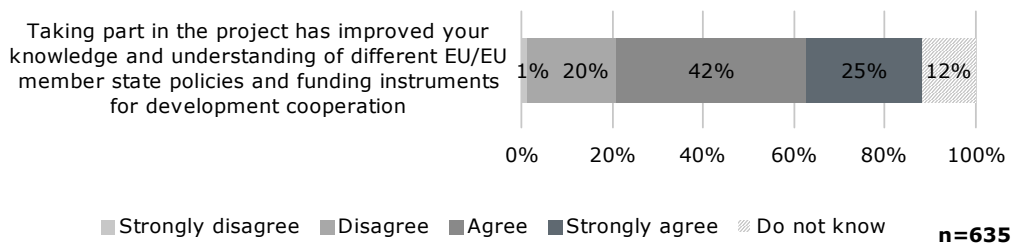
³⁹ Annex 3.2, Figure 27 INCO projects_Q13_During the planning and implementation of the project, did you receive any support and advice from the following

⁴⁰ Annex 3.2, Figure 25 INCO projects_Q11_According to you, taking part in the EU-funded project has offered opportunities to:

mainly refer to their participation in other EU projects, as well as cooperation with other research projects and team, generally not funded by the EU, thus extending networking well beyond the INCO projects themselves. Conversely, little cooperation with development cooperation projects outside of the research realm was mentioned.

The survey indicated that Project participants generally agree to say that their participation in INCO projects has improved their knowledge and understanding of different EU/EU member state policies and funding instruments for development cooperation.

Figure 8 INCO projects_Q12_Please rate to what extent you agree with the following statement:



Interestingly, 89% of participants from INCO countries agree or strongly agree with the statement, which is significantly higher than EU participants (58%). Open answer analysis shows that participants did not refer to a better understanding of the EU policies in development cooperation when justifying a positive statement (about 10% of the answers), but more to EU policies, regulations and initiatives at large (about 20%). The others referred to a better understanding of EU Member States policies (about 25%) or did not provide specific evidence.

Main conclusions regarding synergies:

- There was a clear division of work between INCO and other external policies and development aid instruments. While priorities were aligned, research activities were not identified as a priority to address the needs of Third countries: INCO filled a gap.
- Few mechanisms were in place to support complementarity and synergy between projects and programmes at the operational level. Especially, cooperation with EC delegation in Third countries was weak, and INCO was not identified nor promoted.
- INCO contributed to enhancing particularly Third country participants' awareness of EU policies.

6. Conclusions and lessons learned

Summing up results of INCO's evaluation, the conclusions provide short answers to the questions set by the European Commission. They highlight INCO's main achievements and provide recommendations regarding future international research initiatives in order to build on lessons learned from INCO.

1. What research areas have proved that scientific excellence can only be achieved if carried out with Third Countries research teams?

In the evaluation, it has not been possible to identify specific research areas for which scientific excellence can only be achieved if carried out with Third Countries research teams. Rather, it is the general assumption that international cooperation in research is necessary to achieve research excellence, regardless of the research area.

2. What has been the added value of FP6 INCO? What are its peculiarities if compared to research with Third Countries funded under the Thematic Priorities?

It is the evaluator's opinion, that in comparison to research with Third countries funded under the Thematic Priorities, the added value of FP6 INCO has been twofold.

Firstly, the majority of funds disbursed by INCO were targeting applied research or coordination activities, which closely addressed local and regional needs to tackle challenges and address needs in Third countries.

Secondly, INCO projects achieved the institutional objectives by achieving positive results in terms of enhancing capacities of both researchers and users (including policy makers) and ensuring balanced cooperation between participants from the EU and from INCO targeted countries. An even distribution of funds, a significant number of projects coordinated by Third countries and positive self assessments from project participants have indicated that FP6 INCO clearly achieved Third countries participation.

The analysis has shown that the projects and programme outcomes, certainly benefited research teams and systems, decisions makers, and societies in Third countries/regions, but also provided access to European researchers (and to a lesser degree companies) access to knowledge systems in other parts of the world (within the limits of the INCO programme's overall size). In comparison, the focus in the Thematic Priorities clearly targeted and promoted EU's interests and possible benefits of research cooperation, and more directly addressed knowledge needs for problem solving within Europe or at global level.

3. Has FP6 INCO contributed to build scientific partnerships with Third Countries?

Findings show that building and strengthening international research networks has been a strong INCO outcome, in large parts due to its partnership approach and emphasis on mutual respect, shared interest and benefits being instrumental. A large number of INCO projects were specifically designed to enhance the participation of non-EU countries institutions to international cooperation in research, and the study results indicate a rather high likelihood that the partnership built under FP6 INCO will continue working together in the future. Finally, INCO projects enhanced Third countries' capacities to participate in scientific cooperation at an international level and furthering international research activities was one of the main intended outcomes at the project level.

4. How has FP6 INCO contributed to build a European Research Area (ERA) open to the World?

The contribution of INCO to opening the ERA to the world was strong. INCO's budget was 14 times smaller than the Thematic Priorities' budget, but INCO contribution to Third countries represented about 70% of the contribution of the Thematic Priorities to Third countries participants in FP6.

Building and strengthening networks between EU and non-EU research teams and organisations is one of the strongest achievements of the INCO programme. It is too early to assess the impact on Third countries participation in FP7, but results indicate a positive contribution of INCO to the improvement of Third country organisations' capacities to participate in the FP6 and FP7.

- INCO projects offered a balanced cooperation between participants from the EU and from INCO targeted countries, thus having an empowerment effect.
- A significant number of projects were specifically implemented to strengthen research capacities in INCO targeted countries and set the ground for more and better participation in the Framework Programme.

Third countries participation in FP6 Thematic Priorities has been increasing and trends within FP7 seem to be positive, even if it was difficult to attribute this development only to the INCO programme. There is no doubt, though, that efforts to involve Third countries in the Framework Programme need to be continued, and most likely developing countries will continue needing specific support in order to be able to participate in the FP7.

5. What are presumably long-lasting societal impacts of INCO? Is any evidence already available for that?

Intended outcomes related to improved understanding of social, economic or environmental challenges, enhanced capacity to design and implement a given social, economic or environmental policy, and social, economic or environmental policies reformed/adjusted, could be traced back in most of the projects. However, no evidence of long-lasting societal impacts of INCO could be identified, and it is the assessment of the evaluators that it is too early to judge whether or not impact will occur. The likeliness of impact is assessed as rather limited; given the large scale global issues INCO addressed in combination with the limited scope and reach in terms of budget of the programme. Project participants and stakeholders were largely prudent regarding the up-take of result.

6. What are effective mechanisms that can be devised to support EU external relations and Development cooperation at the policy and programme level?

There was a clear division of work between INCO and other external policies and development aid instruments. INCO priorities were in line with the external policies' priorities, and INCO filled a gap in dealing with research, a tool generally not taken into account by these policies to tackle identified challenges. The critical nature of science and technology for any form of development, particularly for less developed countries is only recently being recognised on a broader front in policy and implementation.

This division of work was accompanied by a lack of communication on the INCO Programme. Certainly, S&T cooperation agreements were said to be fully integrated to national strategies, and steering committees provided a common platform for dialogue to both DGs RELEX/DEV and DG RTD. Few mechanisms were in place, however, to support complementarity and synergy between projects and programmes at the operational level. Especially, cooperation with EC delegation in Third countries was weak, and INCO suffered from a lack of awareness.

In addition to improved communication, there is a need of a well defined political framework to facilitate cooperation across the Commission's DGs and Instruments, in order to ensure complementarity and create synergy. This should contribute to address important issues efficiently with limited resources. The EU Water Initiative provided such a framework, dividing the work between INCO and the Thematic Priorities to achieve a common objective and involving development cooperation activities at EC and Member State level: in this context, both INCO and the Thematic Priority "Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems" funded projects in the field of water in order to support the Initiative, which provided, in return, a common platform for communication and dissemination of results. EDTCP is another good example of inter-service coordination. Such initiatives are visible and efficient, and should be encouraged.

7. What are main lessons to strengthen communication of results and achievements of INCO activities under FP6, increase its impact and provide recommendations for international cooperation within FP7?

It is important to communicate more systematically with EC delegations on projects with Third countries participants.

EC delegations, provided they have sufficient resources, are in the best position to facilitate exchange of experience and good practice between research and development projects and participants, ensure complementarity and synergy, and support the take-up of results. This, of course, would require some effort to build and maintain a network of contact people in EC delegations, beyond the few research counselors in place now; prepare annual country reports on FP7 projects involving third country participation; set up procedures to systematically inform delegations of new projects etc. In return, better informed EC delegations should contribute to reinforcing dialogue at the policy level.

