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International Cooperation
ERA-NET projects, call 2007

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Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2009

ISBN 978-92-79-12928-5
doi:10.2777/36890

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Printed in Belgium

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Foreword



The **Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development (FP7)** places a renewed emphasis on **international cooperation** in Science and Technology which is increasingly seen as being at the centre of Community policies.

International Cooperation in FP7 addresses three interdependent objectives:

- supporting European competitiveness through strategic partnerships with third countries¹ in selected fields of science by engaging the best third countries' scientists to work in and with Europe;
- facilitating contacts with partners in third countries with the aim of providing better access to research carried out elsewhere in the world;
- tackling specific challenges that third countries face or that have a global character on the basis of mutual interest and mutual benefit (e.g. contributing towards Millennium Development Goals and addressing global climate change, combating biodiversity loss, water and energy scarcity).

Significant changes and improvements have taken place in the approach to international cooperation from the 6th Framework Programme (FP6) to FP7, which integrates international research collaboration throughout the Framework Programme and includes both geographical and thematic targeting.

In order to maximise impact, international activities take place across all Specific Programmes of FP7 in a complementary manner. The Cooperation Programme enables research cooperation between different world-wide research partners in collaboration with European researchers. The Capacities Programme supports a range of activities to support S&T cooperation policies and strengthen research capacity in the European scientific community and other regions of the world. The People Programme meets the need to foster both incoming and outgoing international mobility of researchers. The Ideas Programme supports excellence in frontier research and enables individual top international researchers to participate in Europe-led teams.

¹ Countries other than Associated countries to the Framework Programme.

Within the Capacity Programme main activities of International Cooperation range from:

- the bi-regional coordination of S&T cooperation, including priority setting and the support of the S&T policy dialogue (so-called INCO-NET projects), to;
- the bilateral coordination of S&T policies with those countries that signed (or are in the process of signing) an S&T agreement with the Community (so-called BILAT projects);
- the support for trans-national cooperation among NCPs (INCO-NCP networks);
- the support of EU access to third country programmes (ACCESS4EU), and finally;
- the coordination of national policies and activities of Member States and Associated States concerning international S&T cooperation (so-called **ERA-NET** and **ERA-NET Plus projects**).

This booklet presents the activities of the first five ERA-NET projects which have been selected following the evaluation of the first call for proposals published in October 2007 (FP7-INCO-2007-3). These projects aim at stepping up the cooperation and coordination of research programmes carried out at national or regional level in the Member or Associated States through the networking of research programmes, towards their mutual opening and the development and implementation of joint activities. The third countries/regions targeted by these projects are: South Korea, Russia, Black Sea Region, India and Western Balkan Countries.

It is expected that these projects will lead to a greater understanding of R&D procedures in countries outside the EU, will bring new opportunities for collaborative research and facilitate the development and adoption of new evaluation protocols and procedures by the national or regional programmes concerned.

The launch of joint call for proposals co-financed by national resources will enhance the synergies with and the impact of the ongoing bilateral S&T cooperation between Member States and third countries. It will also reinforce complementarities between the Community and Member States and broaden the institutional cooperation. ERA-NET actions are expected to have a lasting impact.



M. Minch
Director of International Cooperation
Directorate General for Research



INDIA



Initiative for the development and integration of Indian and European Research

NEW INDIGO

Reference of the Contract | 226167
EC Contribution | EUR 2 489 785
Starting date | 1 January 2009
Duration | 48 months

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Co-coordinator/CSIR/India
- 3 Department of Biotechnology,
Ministry of Science and Technology**
DBT/India
- 4 Project Management Organisation of the
Federal Ministry of Education and Research
– German Aerospace Centre**
PT-DLR/Germany
- 5 Centre for Social Innovation**
ZSI/Austria
- 6 Foundation for Science and Technology**
FCT/Portugal
- 7 Netherlands Organisation
for Scientific Research**
NWO/Netherlands
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ICAR/India
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ICMR/India
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Background and objectives

India has become a prominent country in Asia not only from the economical and political point of view but also from the scientific point of view. It has been identified as a strategic target country by the European Commission. Since the signature of the Europe-India Science and Technology Agreement in November 2001¹, a Joint Action Plan has been drawn up and EU-India summits in Science and Technology (S&T) are held in order to promote this cooperation. The India-EU Joint Statement of 30 November 2007 indicates that the effort should aim to create a joint infrastructure for advanced research and funding systems for the promotion of S&T collaboration. It was also stated that leaders would welcome strengthened partnership initiatives such as joint projects with co-investment of resources in selected fields of mutual priority. On the other hand, longstanding scientific cooperation between India and certain European countries, especially France, Germany and the UK, is vigorous and fruitful. However, relationships with India in Research and Development (R&D) have not been harmonised so far at a European level. There is little multi-lateral S&T cooperation between the European Union and India, and there is no dedicated programme of cooperation between these two big scientific poles.

The aim of New INDIGO is to help to fill these gaps and ultimately provide the most relevant framework to allow the scientific community and institutions of India to access the European Research Area (ERA), and enable the Euro-Indian S&T cooperation to fully benefit from the new networking tools which have been set up, notably the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7).

By favouring the coordination of bilateral programmes and by promoting joint research projects at the European level, New INDIGO will reinforce the quality and effectiveness of the ERA and at the same time the mutual understanding between the research communities of the two research areas.

Overall strategy

New INDIGO presents itself as an initiative for the development and the integration of Indian and European research, thus building an extended web of partnership to ultimately launch European programmes with India.

This will allow New INDIGO to achieve the following strategic objectives:

- structuring the international dimension of the ERA, through the exchange of information, expertise and best practices and the design of common data bases,
- positioning a strategic partnership with India,
- implementing a Networking Pilot Programme (NPP),
- following up on the NPP,
- paving the way for long-term scientific cooperation between Europe and India.

Implementation and dissemination activities

The 9 partners and 8 observers will contribute actively to the implementation of New INDIGO project.

All partners will fulfill their tasks in order to reach the challenging objectives of the new network:

- building up an efficient model for the Networking Pilot Programme;
- setting up that Program at the core of New INDIGO, defining its management structure, and also gathering financial allocations from EU Member States and Associate Countries as well as India in order to fund common projects;
- identifying relevant fields of Science and Technology to be eligible in the NPP;
- launching joint calls for proposals and evaluation of proposals submitted and monitoring of NPP selected projects;

- conducting a policy foresight study by means of implementing a scenario-based delphi process with policy and programme makers in order to assess potential future paths for S&T relations and cluster building processes between the EU and India.

All partners will strive to raise awareness of potential S&T cooperation between Europe and India.

To this end, it will be important to perform an attentive follow up of the relevance and usefulness of the information produced by the different partners. One of main strategic objectives will be to create the appropriate support for the dissemination of sufficient material to foster robust networking of research players in Europe and India.

A specific action towards thematic ERA-NETs will be launched in order to help integrate India into the ERA networks.

Such an exchange of information will involve seminars and workshops where justified. In particular, for the sake of optimal use of resources, the process of dissemination of S&T cooperation between Europe and India should be undertaken through initiatives implemented independently of New INDIGO. To meet this objective, it will be necessary to follow up relevant cooperation activities between India and Europe.

Events promoted by New INDIGO itself for the purpose of raising awareness on opportunities and disseminating results of the project will take place both in Europe and India.

Moreover, the main activities under the bilateral EC-India S&T Cooperation Agreement and the ones related to International Cooperation in FP7 should be followed by New INDIGO and results disseminated, where justified.

For this purpose, the maintenance of the website will be a main challenge of the project.

In order to allow for maximum dissemination efficiency, a carefully planned dissemination Action Plan will be developed and constantly updated throughout the implementation of New INDIGO.

Expected impact

New INDIGO will significantly contribute to the development of high quality research activities between India and the European Union through:

- The identification of research priorities of mutual interest and benefit between the participating EU Member States and India,
- The management of a joint call, which will help structure high quality collaborative research by not only supporting research projects but also providing the mechanism for future extended programmes and actions,
- The strengthening of national and international standards of S&T programming and programme management.

These three processes will enhance Europe-India research collaboration. The project will provide new means to identify and enhance coordination of high quality research.

¹ Agreement for scientific and technological cooperation between the European Community and the Government of the Republic of India, OJ of EU L 213, 9.8.2002, p. 30-37



BLACK SEA



Networking on science and technology in the black sea region

BS-ERA.NET

Reference of the Contract | 226160
EC Contribution | EUR 2 191 788
Starting date | 1 January 2009
Duration | 36 months

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ENEA/Italia
- 5 The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey**
TÜBİTAK/Turkey
- 6 Ministry of Higher Education and Research**
MESR/France
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CNRS/France
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ANAS/Azerbaijan
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NAS-RA/Armenia
- 10 International Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research at the German Aerospace Centre**
DLR/Germany
- 11 National Information Centre for Ukraine-EU S&T Cooperation at Kyiv State Centre for Scientific, Technical and Economic Information**
NCP/Ukraine
- 12 International Centre for Black Sea Studies**
ICBSS/Greece
- 13 Academy of Science of Moldova**
ASM/Moldova
- 14 Malta Council for Science and Technology**
MCST/Malta
- 15 Georgian National Science Foundation**
GNSF/Georgia
- 16 Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria**
MESB/Bulgaria
- 17 State Committee of Science of Republic of Armenia**
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Background and objectives

To successfully improve the welfare, prosperity and quality of life in the Black Sea Region (BSR), the definition of a sustainable development concept needs to be tailored to the specific realities of this region. The BS-ERA.NET project will address such sustainable development issues according to the agreed principles of the triangle of knowledge consisting of education, research and innovation.

The BSR high profile on scientific research follows the outcome of the EC funded project 'Research Potential of the Black Sea Countries' (BS-ResPot) supported under the Sixth European Framework Programme.

The initiation of the BS-ERA.NET is timely as it exploits the momentum within the European-BS dialogue created by the completion of several FP6 projects targeting the Black Sea Region such as BS-ResPot (Research Potential of the Black Sea Countries) or SCOPE-EAST ('Scenarios for a co-ordinated approach to sustainable S&T co-operation with the Eastern Neighbours of the EU'), and the launch in January 2008 of the INCO-NET EECA ('S&T International Cooperation Network for Eastern European and Central Asian Countries').

The main objectives of the BS-ERA.NET project are:

- To reduce the fragmentation in the European Research Area (ERA);
- to develop and strengthen the coordination of public research programmes conducted at national and regional level, which target a group of countries from the extended Black Sea region;

- to sustain communication in order to develop better reciprocal knowledge and promote trust-building among programme owners and/or managers through a mutual learning process and a systemic exchange of information and good practices;
- to enhance the complementarities and synergy between the Framework Programme and activities carried out in the framework of governmental structures such as COST, EUREKA, NEP, UNESCO-BRESCE, EIROforum, and others;
- to promote networking and mutual openness at the level of national regional research programmes in order to achieve concrete cooperation through the creation of a common Black Sea Research Programme (BSRP) as well as through the development and implementation of joint programmes and activities in the region.

Overall strategy

The overall strategy of the work plan takes into account the current situation in the Black Sea Region with respect to the institutional structures, the decision making lines, the bureaucratic issues, and access to information.

The BS-ERA.NET will enhance synergies and will reinforce the impact of the ongoing bilateral S&T cooperation between Member States and the countries from the Black Sea Region. It will also enhance complementarities between the EC and Member States programmes towards the region and broaden institutional cooperation.

The BS-ERA.NET aims to reduce the fragmentation of the European Research Area by improving the coherence and coordination of national and regional research programmes targeting the Black Sea across the EU Member and Associated States, and to develop expertise from mutual learning.

The activities under BS-ERA.NET will result in concrete co-operation between research programmes such as their networking, their mutual opening, and the development and implementation of joint programmes and activities.

Implementation and dissemination activities

The project features the following major activities:

- The project starts with a **Systematic Information Exchange on National and Multilateral initiatives in the Black Sea Region** which aims at collecting information on the existing national and regional Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) programmes. This work will result in the preparation of a *Synthesis report on the existing national and regional RTDI programmes and in the development of policy recommendations on future RTDI co-operation in Black Sea region*. In addition, a series of short term exchange (1 to 2 weeks) of programme managers between the various organisations will be carried out in order to facilitate the exchange of information.
- Secondly, the project includes the **Definition and preparation of common strategic activities between coordinated RTDI programmes in the Black Sea Region**. The aim is to use the results of the Information Exchange so as to prepare the foundation of the future Black Sea Region RTDI Programme.
- The third main task will consist of **Defining the BS Research Programme (BSRP)** in order to set-up the basis for the Black Sea Joint Call for proposals that will be organised. Amongst others, this task includes activities such as designing a joint evaluation and administration system for the BS Joint Call, elaborating the rules for participation, and identifying financial sources.
- One of the main deliverables of the Black Sea ERA.NET project consists of **The preparation and launching of the first Joint Call under the BSRP for the year 2011**.

The steps to be completed in order to achieve such objective will include designing the management structure of the call, selecting the evaluators on the basis of a commonly agreed set of criteria, preparing specific evaluation guidelines, defining the funding scheme, and launching the regional Joint Call.

- Finally, the consortium will strive to **communicate and disseminate** the results of this work through the use of three main channels:

- a website;
- a network of contact points in the countries concerned;
- a quarterly electronic newsletter.

Expected impact

The BlackSea-ERA.NET project is expected to have a lasting impact. The co-operation developed should provide reliable grounds for it to continue beyond the EC funding. In this respect, the BS-ERA.NET partners agreed to implement the First Black Sea Research Programme (BSRP) for the year 2011.

The expected impact of the BS-ERA.NET is foreseen to:

- lead to a critical strategic corridor between East and West;
- develop opportunities for programme makers and programme managers from the European Union to interact with the Black Sea region;
- provide for the first time in the region an integrated instrument for joint actions (the BSRP);
- develop the first European activities for supporting the coordination between national and regional RTDI programmes in the region since the EU became an effective part of the Black Sea (1 January 2007);
- complement the policies at the regional level by facilitating the cooperation between the EU and the region through the BSRP.



RUSSIA



Linking Russia to the ERA: Coordination of MS/AC S&T programmes towards and with Russia

ERA.NET RUS

Reference of the Contract | 226164
EC Contribution | EUR 2 597 408
Starting date | 1 February 2009
Duration | 48 months

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BMWF/Austria
- 4 Centre for Social Innovation**
ZSI/Austria
- 5 Government Office for Research and Technology**
NKTH/Hungary
- 6 Academy of Finland**
AKA/Finland
- 7 General Secretariat for Research and Technology**
GSRT/Greece
- 8 Archimedes Foundation**
Archimedes/Estonia
- 9 Research Council of Norway**
RCN/Norway
- 10 The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey**
TÜBİTAK/Turkey
- 11 Russian Research Center, Kurchatov Institute**
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- 12 State University, Higher School of Economics**
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- 13 International Centre for Innovations in Science, Technology and Education**
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BMBF/Germany
- 17 Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs**
MAEE/France
- 18 Joint Research Centre, Institute of Prospective Technological Studies**
IPTS/EU/Spain

Background and objectives

Russia, as the EU's largest direct neighbouring country and as a global player on the political and economic stage, is in many respects considered as one of the main strategic international partners of many EU Member States as well as the European Commission. There are tight links between the EU and Russian science communities on various levels. However, the development of joint funding schemes between programme owners in EU Member States/Associated Countries (MS/AC) lags far behind the opportunities and needs to raise the full potential of scientific and technological (S&T) cooperation between the respective research communities. The ERA.Net RUS project will address the issue through increasing the cooperation and coordination of research programmes carried out at national or regional level in the MS/AC towards and with Russia.

To this end, the ERA.Net RUS project aims to:

- raise knowledge on bilateral and national S&T programmes with or towards Russia and on relevant activities of other programme owners;
- identify common ground across bilateral S&T programmes of MS/AC with Russia and provide a basis for a joint programmatic approach;
- learn lessons from ongoing (thematic) ERA-NET projects involving Russian programme owners and identify good practices;
- develop an appropriate instrumental setting for joint funding activities;
- implement a pilot joint call and draw lessons from it;
- develop and promote a sustainable joint S&T programme with Russia.

III Overall strategy

The ERA.Net RUS project will contribute to the success of the European Research Area (ERA) by improving the coherence and coordination across Europe of international S&T cooperation programmes with Russia. The project focus will be on exploring options for linking bilateral S&T programmes in a variable geometry.

The project work plan will follow a progressive approach which covers four main steps of action:

- the implementation of a knowledge based dialogue between programme owners in the MS/AC and in Russia;
- the identification of options for joint funding activities of particular benefit for programme owners in the MS/AC and the design of implementation scenarios;
- the implementation of a pilot joint call of interested programme owners in MS/AC and Russia and the assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the joint funding scheme;
- the development of a sustainable S&T programme to be agreed upon by interested programme owners from the MS/AC and Russia.

The project consortium will strive for actively involving Russian programme owners in the various steps, in particular, the planning, implementation and assessment of a pilot joint call and the planning of a sustainable S&T programme.

III Implementation and dissemination activities

Project activities are split up into six Work Packages (WP) following the progressive approach:

- WP1:** Preparing the analytical ground for coordinating the participating MS/AC S&T and innovation programmes towards Russia or with Russian programme owners
- WP2:** Developing and disseminating a concept for a coordination of activities of S&T and innovation programme owners in the participating MS/AC and Russia
- WP3:** Preparing, implementing and assessing a pilot joint call
- WP4:** Developing, disseminating and promoting a sustainable programme
- WP5:** Information dissemination, communication and links
- WP6:** Project coordination and management

In order to assure a wide outreach of the project activities, the means of dissemination include:

- the development of a Knowledge Management Plan, describing the internal and external information management, the dissemination strategy and its tools and instruments;
- a dynamic web-based 'Communication and Information Management System' allowing both restrictive and open access complementary tools for proactive external communication and public relations;
- conferences addressing (non-) governmental programme owners and science and innovation communities.

The project will also take advantage of the ERA.Net Learning Platform and the NETWATCH information platform under the ERAWATCH scheme for mutual learning and the exchange of good practices between different ERA-NET projects and the International Learning Network, which will provide a forum for methodical learning between FP7 INCO-NET, BILAT, ERA-NET projects.

IV Expected impact

Focusing on Russia, the ERA.Net RUS project targets the largest neighbouring country of the EU and one of its main strategic partners. It will further emphasise the significance of the EU-Russian partnership and will help to reach a new level in EU-Russian S&T cooperation by improving the coherence and coordination of European scientific cooperation with Russia and the complementarities between the participating MS/AC and the EC activities.

In addition, fragmentation of activities towards S&T cooperation between MS/AC and Russia both within bilateral S&T programmes of individual MS/AC and of various other governmental and non-governmental programme owners is expected to be reduced. Thus ERA.Net RUS will essentially contribute to strengthening the international dimension of the ERA. It will help to widen the ERA's trans-national approach on S&T cooperation, with benefits for European and Russian S&T communities, policy-makers, economies and societies.



SOUTH KOREA



Korean scientific cooperation network with the European Research Area

KORANET

Reference of the Contract | 226154
EC Contribution | EUR 2 398 321
Starting date | 1 January 2009
Duration | 48 months

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- 3 Center for Social Innovation**
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VDI/VDE-IT/Germany
- 5 British Council**
BC/United Kingdom
- 6 Technical Research Center of Finland**
VTT/Finland
- 7 Veneto Innovazione S.p.A**
VenInn/Italy
- 8 National Centre for Scientific Research**
CNRS/France
- 9 Polish Academy of Science**
PAN/Poland
- 10 Hungarian Korean Technical Cooperation Center**
HKTCC/Hungary
- 11 Scientific and Technological Research Council**
TÜBİTAK/Turkey

Background and objectives

The European Community and the Republic of Korea signed two cooperation agreements in November 2006, one regarding science and technology (S&T) cooperation and another relating to fusion energy research. These agreements provide the legal basis for European-Korean research cooperation and promote collaboration between the respective research communities.

KORANET aims at enhancing the existing research partnership between European countries and South Korea. The project will contribute to increasing the quality, quantity, profile and impact of S&T cooperation activities between South Korea and the European Research Area (ERA). This will be achieved through several analytical exercises (mappings, foresight studies, inventories of research institutions and other reports), the establishment of a pilot funding scheme, and a joint funding programme as well as several joint activities (conferences, workshops, information and brokerage events).

KORANET thus aims at building a sustainable and coordinated ERA, at enhancing the cooperation of Korean and European researchers, and at increasing the Korean participation in the Seventh Research Framework Programme.

The more detailed **objectives of KORANET** are:

- improving information exchange and cooperation between Korean and European research communities;
- exchanging best practices as regards the planning and implementation of S&T policies and international S&T cooperation;
- coordinating bilateral approaches of the participating EU Member States/Associated Countries and South Korea;
- specifying areas of cooperation in priority research fields;
- establishing an appropriate framework for strategic cooperation;
- developing a one-stop agency for Korean S&T interests;
- learning from ongoing ERA-NETs (good practice);
- developing and implementing a full concept for a joint funding programme in a thematic area (based on a pilot joint funding scheme);
- increasing Korean participation in the EU Research Framework Programme.

III Overall strategy

The work of KORANET is divided into five Work Packages (WPs), four of them dealing with thematic and one with organisational and managerial issues.

The Work Packages are:

- **WP 1: Analysis, monitoring, review**
Mapping of regional approaches including the preparation of reports and specific studies on S&T cooperation as well as an analysis of cooperation instruments and approaches
- **WP 2: Strategy and foresight**
Leading strategic discussions, identifying cooperation areas of common interest, setting framework objectives for future cooperation
- **WP 3: Joint funding**
Development and implementation of a pilot joint funding scheme and based on its evaluation a joint funding programme of programme owners
- **WP 4: Joint activities**
Implementing a continuous scientific and policy dialogue (annual conferences dedicated to different topics, workshops, brokerage and information events, networking activities for researchers)
- **WP 5: Organisation and management**
General coordination of the project including information dissemination

For KORANET, a 'parallel Work Package approach' was adopted. This means that all five Work Packages run through the whole four-year duration of the project. The main advantages of this approach are that all KORANET partners are involved in the project implementation process from the very beginning to the end. This will lead to a higher interdependency of the results, the creation of synergies between Work Packages and the securing of the commitment of all partners throughout the whole duration of the project.

Competency networks and clusters are a typical vehicle to bring together researchers, research institutions and business/industry. KORANET therefore envisages the networking of competence networks through a strong involvement of existing European networks and Korean clusters. Both regional as well as thematic networks/clusters will be considered.

III Implementation and dissemination activities

The various objectives of KORANET will be reached through:

- mutual learning through mapping exercises, foresight studies and analytical reports;
- implementing a knowledge-based dialogue between political decision-makers and programme owners in European countries and South Korea;
- information gathering and dissemination of European-Korean S&T cooperation opportunities;
- networking thematic and regional competence networks/clusters in Europe and South Korea;
- identifying options for joint funding activities of programme owners;
- implementing a sustainable joint funding programme and assessing its effectiveness and efficiency.

The partners of KORANET will disseminate the project's outcomes to a broad audience to ensure the optimal spread and use of the gathered information. The various dissemination activities will raise the awareness for the S&T potential in South Korea and inform interested stakeholders from science, industry and policy about the opportunities for an enhanced S&T cooperation.

The dissemination activities include:

- the establishment of a KORANET project website on which the project results (reports, databases, inventories) will be made publicly available;
- the development and regular update of an internal Knowledge Management Plan and a project intranet where internal information and documents will be made available to all KORANET partners;
- tools for proactive external communication such as a project leaflet, press releases, regular project newsletters and presentations of the project at relevant events (conferences, workshops, etc.);
- the targeted distribution of project outcomes to relevant stakeholders (e.g. to national ministries and research institutions, universities, science counsellors, other projects or institutions dealing with South Korea, etc.);

- a continuous scientific and policy dialogue including annual conferences, workshops, brokerage events and other networking activities;
- the participation in the NETWATCH Information System (a central platform for ERA-NETs) and the ERA-NET Learning Platform.

IV Expected impact

KORANET's activities will help make the ERA a success by improving the coherence of the international S&T cooperation approaches of the individual European countries. Furthermore, it will strengthen the international dimension of the ERA in relation to East Asia.

Furthermore, KORANET will support the cooperation and coordination of research programmes carried out at the national level in the EU Member States and Associated Countries targeting South Korea as a European partner country that has gained importance in the last years. The learning experience gained from devising and implementing the joint funding programme will facilitate the future development of transnational programmes.

To sum up, the KORANET project will foster international S&T as well as competence network/cluster cooperation between South Korea and Europe. Thus, it will contribute to better science, greater policy and regulatory synergies, mutual economic gain through innovation and an increased impact of science on key global issues. KORANET's strategic analyses and cooperation experiences will provide a better understanding for future S&T networking activities with South Korea.





SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

A stylized graphic illustration of South-East Europe. The map of the region is rendered in white and light blue, set against a dark blue background featuring a faint world map. A large, curved banner with the European Union flag's blue field and yellow stars is draped across the map. The overall design is modern and uses a blue color palette.

Further integrating key research institutions from Southeast Europe into the European Research Area

SEE-ERA.NET PLUS

Reference of the Contract | 226156
EC Contribution | EUR 1 517 153
Starting date | 1 April 2009
Duration | 46 months

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List of partners

- 1 Centre for Social Innovation**
Coordinator/ZSI/Austria
- 2 Federal Ministry of Science and Research**
BMWf/Austria
- 3 Ministry of Education and Science**
MOES/Albania
- 4 Ministry of Science, Education and Sports**
MZOS/Croatia
- 5 Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs**
MAEE/France
- 6 Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
MVP/Bosnia-Herzegovina
- 7 Ministry of Education and Science**
MON/Bulgaria
- 8 Ministry of Higher Education and Research**
MESR/France
- 9 Federal Ministry of Education and Research**
BMBF/Germany
- 10 Project Management Agency of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research at the German Aerospace Centre**
PT-DLR/Germany
- 11 General Secretariat for Research and Technology**
GSRT/Greece
- 12 Ministry of Education and Science**
MON-MK/Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- 13 Ministry of Education and Science**
MPIN/Montenegro
- 14 National Authority for Scientific Research**
ANCS/Romania
- 15 Ministry of Science and Technological Development**
MSTD/Serbia
- 16 Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology**
MHESST/Slovenia
- 17 The Scientific and Technological Research Council**
TÜBİTAK/Turkey

Background and objectives

In essence, SEE-ERA.NET PLUS is about pooling finances between participating programmes. The European Commission provides a financial top-up for the transparent implementation and organisation of a joint call for proposals. The core call objective is the further integration of the Western Balkan Countries (WBCs) and their key research communities into the European Research Area (ERA), based on the forerunner project SEE-ERA.NET. It will further enhance the coordination of bilateral research and development (R&D) cooperation with all six Western Balkan Countries (WBCs). The consortium consists of various partners from EU Member States (6), Western Balkan Countries (6) and Turkey. It involves the relevant R&D programme owners from the involved countries, which are ministries or agencies responsible for science, technology and/or research.

SEE-ERA.NET PLUS supports:

- executing R&D with the WBCs against strategic priorities at European level;
- continued integration of bilateral research and technological development (RTD) initiatives into multilateral, jointly agreed activities with high synergetic impact;
- reducing duplication of efforts across Europe;
- strengthening research communities in new Member States and WBCs and preparing them for participation in the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7);
- satisfying the cooperation need for R&D cooperation in the SEE region, as proven by the huge interest in the Pilot Joint Call of SEE-ERA.NET.

<http://plus.see-era.net>

II Overall strategy

SEE-ERA.NET PLUS will launch a single call for Joint European Research Projects (JERPs) with a planned call budget of around EUR 3.5 million. The impressive figure of EUR 2.675 million shows the national commitment to the project. Compared to other national funding sources for research collaboration in the target region, the SEE-ERA.NET PLUS call budget will be the largest amount of money dedicated to one call for project proposals in South East Europe, including all the WBCs. The principle of *juste retour* will be applied.

A careful selection of scientific priorities will allow combining the two goals of enhancing cooperation with the WBCs and fostering scientific excellence.

Ensuring funding of high-quality research will be achieved through:

- establishing a Scientific Council;
- two-step submission procedure of the call;
- using an extensive pool of more than 1 400 distinguished external evaluators covering a broad range of relevant scientific disciplines for remote evaluation of proposals;
- basing the selection of proposals on scientific excellence as main criterion.

The SEE-ERA.NET PLUS project will coordinate national R&D funding programmes, which were managed previously only in a bilateral mode. Through a coordinated pooling of previously scattered resources, the consortium can make significantly more resources available than it was possible via bilateral cooperation agreements. This also results in substantially more funding per research project, making larger-scale research more possible than in previous small-scale bilateral projects.

Each research project consortium will need to involve at least three teams from different SEE-ERA.NET PLUS countries. In this way, a truly multilateral cooperation will be ensured, thereby preparing scientific networks for future cooperation in the Framework Programme.

III Implementation and dissemination activities

SEE-ERA.NET PLUS is structured in four work packages: (1) Preparing the Call, (2) Implementing and monitoring the Call, (3) Management and Dissemination, and (4) Sustainability.

As regards the call for Joint European Research Projects (JERPs), this is envisaged to be implemented in a two-step selection process based on an Expression of Interest (EoI) as a first step, and the independent evaluation and ranking of the full proposals of the JERPs as a second step. This first step identifies the scientifically best suited EoI for the full proposal round, thereby ensuring the participation of the most suited project partners. This step prevents unsuccessful project applicants from spending much time and effort on preparing a full proposal.

A pool of external evaluators will be consulted in both call rounds: for the EoI, the first step, two external evaluators will carry out a remote evaluation via an electronic evaluation system. For the second step, the full proposal round of the call, three evaluators per proposal will be consulted.

A Scientific Council for SEE-ERA.NET PLUS composed of eminent scientists from the participating countries will be set up in order to provide support and guarantee scientific excellence concerning the evaluation and selection procedure.

Dissemination will be carried out via National Contact Points, relevant contacts and websites, such as the project website, websites of consortium members and CORDIS. In addition to the above-mentioned channels, the consortium will use the following ways to distribute information specifically on its call:

- via sending information to applicants to the SEE-ERA.NET Pilot Joint Call and to other scientists stored in the databases of the consortium partners;
- publication in at least one international journal;
- publication in national newspapers of the involved countries (at least in three different countries), via relevant websites, eNewsletter and scientific forums with the topic of science and technology (S&T) in the WBCs.

IV Expected impact

The project is expected to further integrate the WBCs and their key research communities into the ERA by launching a single call for Joint European Research Projects with a planned call budget of more than EUR 3.5 million. This activity will engage scientists and key actors in R&D policy making in the countries participating in the broad SEE-ERA.NET PLUS consortium, including EU Member States, associated states and all WBCs. The results of this activity will not only contribute to further strengthening the ongoing cooperation among the participating countries, which can build on a successful Pilot Joint Call in the frame of the SEE-ERA.NET project. It will also create a significant European added value in many respects.

On a political level, the project contributes in several ways to European added value, the most important objective being to further integrate the WBCs in ERA. It is of major importance for Europe to involve the WBCs in its structures and policies as far as currently possible to contribute to political stability and to sustainable development in the region. Thus, SEE-ERA.NET PLUS contributes not only to cooperation with EU members, but provides a forum to stimulate cooperation amongst WBCs. In view of possible accession to the EU of WBCs, SEE-ERA.NET PLUS contributes to the process of acclimating WBCs to general European procedures and rules as well as those specific to S&T.

European Commission

**EUR 24034 — ERA-NET: Speaking with one voice
International Cooperation ERA-NET projects, call 2007**

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

2009 — 28 pp. — 21.0 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-12928-5

doi:10.2777/36890

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The Seventh Framework Programme for Research – FP7 (2007-2013) places a renewed emphasis on international cooperation in science and technology (S&T).

The new approach of international cooperation in FP7 aims to support European competitiveness through strategic partnerships with third countries, facilitating access to research carried out elsewhere in the world, and tackling specific challenges that third countries face or that have a global character on the basis of mutual interest and benefit.

International cooperation is embedded into the different specific programmes of FP7. The underpinning activities aimed at building a European Research Area open to the world are carried out under the Activities of International Cooperation of the Capacities Specific Programme and include the ERA-NET projects presented in these synopses.

The ERA-NET projects will step up the cooperation and coordination of research programmes carried out at national or regional level in the Member or Associated States through the networking of research programmes, towards their mutual opening and the development and implementation of joint activities.

The first wave of funded projects targets the following regions/countries: South Korea, Russia, Black Sea Region, India and South East Europe.

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ISBN 978-92-79-12928-5



9 789279 129285



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