

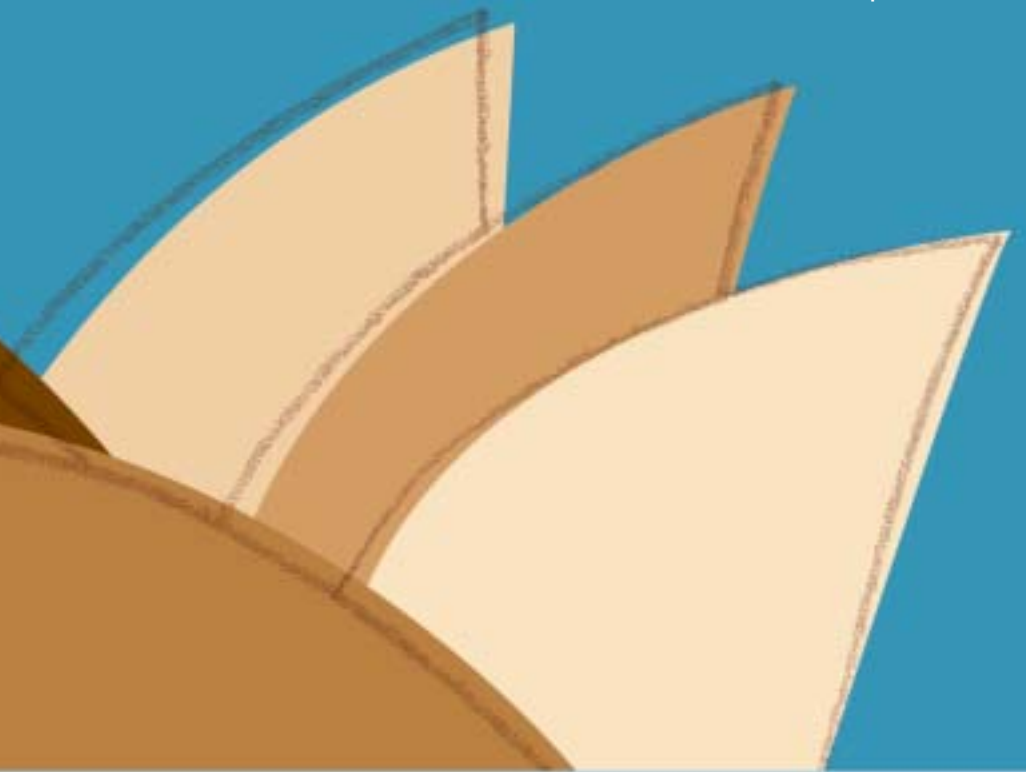


EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Community research

Forum on European - Australian Science and Technology cooperation (FEAST)

Assessment Report



STUDIES



INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION POLICY

Interested in European research?

RTD info is our quarterly magazine keeping you in touch with main developments (results, programmes, events, etc.). It is available in English, French and German. A free sample copy or free subscription can be obtained from:

European Commission
Directorate-General for Research
Information and Communication Unit
B-1049 Brussels
Fax (32-2) 29-58220
E-mail: research@cec.eu.int
Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/rtdinfo/index_en.html

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Research
Unit N.1 – International Scientific Cooperation Policy

E-mail: inco@cec.eu.int

Contact: Irmela BRACH

European Commission

Office [SDME 01/143]

B-1049 Brussels

Forum on European - Australian Science and Technology cooperation (FEAST)

Assessment Report

A report by an independant expert
Karsten Brenner
(former) Director General BMFT (DE)

***Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union***

**Freephone number:
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11**

LEGAL NOTICE:

Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the following information.

The views expressed in this publication are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (<http://europa.eu.int>).

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

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004

© European Communities, 2004

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Belgium

PRINTED ON WHITE CHLORINE-FREE PAPER

TABLE OF CONTENT

Executive Summary	2
1. Introduction: The remit of the review and its approach	3
2. The context of the FEAST project	5
2.1. The internationalisation strategies of EU and of member countries	5
2.2. Strategies on the Australian side	6
2.3. The case for closer cooperation and exchanges	7
3. FEAST – its mission, structure, resources and working mechanisms	10
3.1. The initiative	10
3.2. Mission and objectives	10
3.3. Organisational structure and governance	11
3.4. Funding	12
3.5. Office and staff	12
3.6. Instruments and activities	13
4. The assessment of FEAST and what has been achieved	14
4.1. The reception of FEAST in the Australian research community	14
4.2. What has been achieved, where have objectives not been reached	16
5. Options for the future and interim conclusion	20
5.1. The options	20
5.2. Interim conclusion	21
6. Recommendations (1)	22
6.1. Mission, objectives and guidelines for FEAST II second phase of the joint European/Australian project	22
6.2. Tasks and objectives in detail	22
6.3. organisation and affiliation of FEAST II and funding mechanisms	25
6.4. resources and staff	26
6.5. interaction with the scientific counsellor in Brussels	27
7. The broader context	
Further framework conditions for stimulating European-Australian cooperation in S&T	28
8. Recommendations (2)	
FEAST as a model for European cooperation with other third countries and world regions	29
References	31

Executive Summary

- I. **FEAST** is a joint European-Australian initiative aimed at identifying, supporting and strengthening linkages and cooperative ventures between Australia and Europe in the fields of science and technology. The **remit of this review** is to evaluate the project, established in 2001 and conceived, as a first step, for the period 2002-2004.
- II. The agreed **objectives of FEAST** are to:
 - highlight existing multilateral and bilateral science and technology cooperation between Europe and Australia; and
 - improve this cooperation, particularly multilateral cooperation, through identifying priorities and enhancing the quality, quantity and visibility of future action.
- III. Interviews and other review work have shown the **growing awareness of the value of closer Australian-European collaboration in S&T**, within the Australian research community but also on agency and policy level. Mutual information about strategies, priorities, funding mechanisms, modes of cooperation and exchange schemes has undoubtedly improved.
- IV. To expect that a pivotal joint undertaking like FEAST could have massive immediate effects in terms of newly funded projects and networks would be unrealistic. An effort like the joint European-Australian Forum, created only two years ago, requires a **longer term perspective**. Being no funding body but a “market place for S&T collaboration”, FEAST has a catalyst function instigating initiatives to be jointly developed bottom-up by researchers from both communities. All indicators available show that the project is already having a **stimulating impact on European-Australian relations in S&T**.
- V. The review comes to the conclusion that Europe and Australia should go on with FEAST, but define a clear new **mission, objectives and guidelines for a second phase 2005-2008** and equip the lean body with the minimum of resources required.
- VI. FEAST may be seen as an appropriate **model** for intensifying relations with **other industrialised partner countries**. It is, however, important to stress that such a forum can only support a fully-fledged strategy for internationalisation but not replace it. The report develops a list of requirements to be checked before the EU embarks on new FEAST-like initiatives.
- VII. On the side of the EU **it should be clarified at Council level if Member States** are willing to **participate actively in such international fora**, jointly utilised frameworks for cooperation and platforms for better marketing their R&D potential vis-à-vis countries and world-regions where many of them are not represented by science counsellors.

1.

Introduction

The remit of the review and its approach

FEAST is a joint European-Australian initiative aimed at identifying, supporting and strengthening linkages and cooperative ventures between Australia and Europe in the fields of research and technological development. The remit of this review is to evaluate the project that was established in the year 2001 and conceived, as a first step, for the period 2002-2004. The agreed objectives of FEAST are to:

- highlight existing multilateral and bilateral science and technology cooperation between Europe and Australia; and
- improve this cooperation, particularly multilateral cooperation, through identifying priorities and enhancing the quality, quantity and visibility of future action.

The project is funded under the specific programme INCO-2 of the 5th Framework Programme of the European Community. At the same time it is a joint European-Australian initiative under the umbrella of the S&T Cooperation Agreement of 1994, the main partners being the European Commission (EC) and the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST).

FEAST was launched in 2000/2001 but its first full year of operation was 2002. The term of the project is limited until the end of 2004, its continuation being subject to an evaluation in 2004 and a new decision to be taken on that basis.

The **objectives of this review** are:

- to assess the past and on-going activities of FEAST in relation to EU-AU cooperation in the field of S&T
- to assess how far the on-going FEAST activities have created the basis for a more intense and closer relationship so as to develop new forms of partnerships
- to formulate recommendations relevant to effective implementation of future similar FEAST-like mechanisms
- to ascertain the extent of European Member States participation and collaboration and direct impact of such incentives.

This **review** was done in **three stages**:

- Interviews with Directors and Heads of Units of the European Commission in Brussels and with representatives of German research agencies (in order to include the aspect of bilateral relations with Australia)

- Interviews and face to face discussions in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne with the various stakeholders on the Australian side (Government Departments of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR), Scientific Advisors to the Government, Academies, Funding Councils, Universities, Research Institutes, individual researchers and others), and with Representatives of EU Member States, incl. the acceding countries, with the responsible FEAST manager, the contractual nominee and the EU-Delegation in Canberra
- Analysis of written information and documentation relating to European/Australian cooperation and exchanges and about the activities and impact of FEAST.

Acknowledgements to the colleagues and interview partners on the Australian and on the European side, in particular to the EU Delegation in Canberra, to the international desk of the EC and, last but not least, to the Executive Manager of FEAST who have all been immensely supportive and given me valuable information and advice.

I have to express my thanks to all who have helped me with their expertise, openness and practical assistance in this review process. Many were already highly dedicated to the FEAST project, supportive and critical at the same time, others learned only through our interviews about the potential offered by this unique project. All were open to intensifying Australian-European collaboration and exchanges. Many spoke in favour of starting together more courageous initiatives in terms of substantial projects of excellence, closer network and cluster building. And very often it was stressed that opportunities for young researchers to gain experience in the partner region and joint training of our future scientists will best create the long-term basis for a stronger alliance between Europe and Australia in science and technology.

Karsten BRENNER
April 2004

2. The context of the FEAST project

2.1. *The internationalisation strategies of the EU and of member countries*

When developing the concept of the European Research Area the European Union has reconfirmed its view that European cooperation in science and technology is to be open to other regions and to partners world-wide.

“Sharing research and scientific know-how between countries and communities is more crucial than ever in our modern world. It is key to improving economic growth, building sustainable development, tackling poverty and creating a world-wide network for the advancement of science and technology.” (DG Mitsos of the European Commission, 2003)

With the formulation of the 4th and 5th and even more of the 6th Framework Programme the EU has developed a strategic approach for international cooperation in S&T. The bulk of FP6 (pillars one and two) is in all thematic areas open to participation by international partners in projects and networks and fostering such cooperation and exchanges through additional targeted measures.

In this context, cooperation with Australia is considered one of the priorities: the 1994 S&T agreement between the EU and Australia was the first the EU had concluded with an industrialised country. “The collaboration has been a success, with Australian research institutes joining forces with European counterparts to work, in particular, in information technologies and ‘quality of life’ issues such as agriculture and biotechnology.” (European Commission 2003: A world-wide vision for European research)

The installation of FEAST, a joint Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology Cooperation, in 2002 was a concrete step towards furthering the relationship, supporting collaborative activities and instigating new researcher-led initiatives from both sides. Its primary goal was to alert Australian researchers to the opportunities the European Research Area and the Framework Programme offer. FEAST as a catalyst for cooperation, so far, is unique and has a pivotal role in the Community’s external relations in S&T. If successful, it could become a model for intensifying the links with other international partners and regions.

The opening of programmes and activities on the European level goes hand in hand with similar processes in the Member States. Here too, the awareness is growing that approaches and methods of national research promotion have to be taken under review and that international collaboration both within Europe and beyond must be eased and fostered in order to tackle cross-border problems jointly, to realise synergies and/or provide a critical mass of excellence and resources.

Some European Member States have a tradition of actively supporting the mobility of young researchers, inviting talented PhD students and post-docs from other

countries and giving their own young people the chance to gain research experience abroad. On Community level the Marie Curie outgoing and incoming fellowships have added a comparable element of individual mobility to the Framework Programme. Such schemes are highly appropriate to develop personal links between the European and Australian research communities, paving the way for closer cooperation over the geographic distance. Australia is one of the most requested target countries of young Europeans, and Australian applicants are particularly successful in European selection processes.

2.2. Strategies on the Australian side

Australia, traditionally, has a reputation for excellent research of international standing. As a smaller country, by size of its population, and for geographical reasons it has always been strongly dependent on keeping close links with the international community. The Australian Government and the researchers themselves are fully aware of the imperative, that in times of a global knowledge economy and society first-class relevant research can only be done as an active and recognized part of the international scene, in networks and collaboration with the best partners world-wide.

In the Australian research community expectations are high that research promotion, its approaches, mechanisms and funding procedures favour an international orientation and support personal contacts, exchanges, network building, joint projects and clusters. There is an ongoing and often growing interest to collaborate with European partners. Cooperation with the strong research scene in the United States is and remains highly attractive and activities with the neighbour countries in the Asian-Pacific sphere are clearly of increasing priority.

Australian links with the research scene in Europe, however, are strongest, certainly for historical reasons but also because of Europe's growing attractiveness in view of its advancing integration and its enlargement process, together with the development of a European Research Area. During the recent decade Europe has become the largest research partner of Australia. Among Australia's international co-authorships, in 1999 45% involved an EU researcher as a partner, compared to 35 % for USA and 7 % for Japan (Linda Butler, ANU).

Like the European member countries, Australia is currently reviewing its research policy strategy and support system and adapting them to the requirements of internationalisation, the prime criterion for public funding remaining, of course, the excellence of research. Commissioned by DEST a study by Allen Consulting on Best practice in international S&T Policy was recently published, also taking stock of the depth of internationalisation achieved by Australia

According to this study Europeans are partners in about 38 % of all Australian S&T collaborations, compared to USA 23 % and Asia/SEAsia 28 %. With regard to Australian expenditure on international collaborations the figures end up to all Europe 34 %, USA 25 % and Asia/SEA 32 %.

There are remarkable initiatives for easing and furthering international collaboration: the Australian Research Council (ARC), the largest funding body in the country, with its Linkage International Programme aims at connecting Australian researchers with the world's leading edge-knowledge, expertise and techniques in overseas business and research centres. DEST has launched a special "Innovation Access Programme" supporting Australian research teams to collaborate with international partners in projects and networks and enabling them to take part in European FP activities. Under the same IAP, the DITR manages the International Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation Showcasing Fund. The Research Councils, too, are co-financing the Australian part in such joint activities.

Beyond cooperation via projects and networks Australia's Chief Scientist Robin Batterham is developing an even more ambitious strategy, i.e. combining forces with other countries through joint cluster building, linking in a longer perspective the research of Australian centres of excellence with competence clusters in Europe and other regions.

The lack of synchronisation of evaluation and funding procedures between the Australian and the European side, however, leads to practical problems and barriers that quite often prevent initiatives to be brought to life.

The Australian National Health & Medical Research Council, therefore, has decided that an Australian project participation in an FP project or network will be supported if the evaluation and selection process has been carried through successfully in Brussels, a remarkable trust in the stringency of European procedures and a model for making more international cooperation reality.

2.3. The case for closer cooperation and exchanges

There is still plenty of room for intensifying cooperation in S&T between the EU and Australia, and there are good reasons, too.

Being a smaller country with a necessarily limited resource base Australia markets its international position in science claiming that it has the highest number of Nobel Prize winners per capita in the world

Although the country's population amounts to 0.3 % of world population producing 1 % of global GDP, it produces 2.9 % of the world's scientific publications and its citation rate comes up to even 4.2 %. (The Hon. Brendan Nelson, Minister for Education and Science, National Press Club 24 March 2004). Australia's level of government-financed expenditure on R&D is remarkable by international standards:

In 2000 it came up to 0.71 % of GDP, compared to an OECD average of 0.64 % and of 0.66 % in the EU. On the other hand the investment of business and industry into R&D is rather low, BERD as a share of GDP (0.78 % in 2002-02) being still less than half of the OECD average (1.62 %) and significantly lower than in the EU (1.27 %).

In recent years Australia has made major new investments in science and innovation. Under the Backing Australia's Ability programme, a strategic, whole of government approach was adopted, injecting an additional three billion Australian \$ into the science and innovation system for the period 2001/2 to 2005/6. Funding of the Australian Research Council was doubled, as funding for health and medical research through the NHMRC had been doubled following the 1999 Wills Review. (see Mapping Australian Science and Innovation – an Australian Government Initiative)

A series of reforms and initiatives has contributed to strengthen the S&T base of the country. The 38 universities have developed strategies for internationalisation and are very successful in attracting foreign students, mainly from neighbouring Asian countries but also from Europe and other parts of the world

Leading Australian universities cooperate closely in the "Group of Eight", one of their objectives being to provide access to international networks and to represent Australia in international forums. In Europe the group is present with a very active Australia Centre located in Berlin. Since the mid 1980s the ARC has run a Special Research Centres programme concentrating strategic basic research in areas of national priority, followed by the creation of 8 new ARC Centres of Excellence, and of additional three major centres, co-funded with other partners, i.e. the National ICT Australia, the National Stem Cell Centre and the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics.

The ARC's new Research Networks programme will provide support for building stronger interconnections between researchers across disciplinary, organisational, institutional and geographic boundaries. The Cooperative Research Centres Scheme (CRC), established in 1995 for bringing together researcher and research users from private and public sectors, plays an important role in the Australian innovation system. Via its "Flagships" programme, CSIRO, the national science agency, carrying out R&D activities in fields of economic, social and environmental importance, has established large-scale science partnerships with other research institutions, companies and selected international partners.

With such research teams and networks Australia is well positioned for developing closer links with the European research community. And for Europe, Australia, through its major investment and reforms during recent years, has become an even more attractive partner, not to mention the natural and unique advantages the country offers for various kinds of research work, from environmental issues to activities requiring large, radio-quiet spaces

Australia's four national research priorities overlap widely with those of the European Community and its Member States: Environmental protection and sustainability, promotion and maintenance of good health, frontier technologies for industries and safeguarding issues.

Australian researchers are building on their close connections with research partners in many EU Member States for bilateral collaborations and exchanges. Participation in FP supported projects and networks, however, becomes ever more important for Australia as it opens access to wider EU research networks, now including also the acceding countries of central and eastern Europe. This becomes all the more attractive when the best teams from the European research landscape join forces to tackle challenging scientific, technological and societal problems, work on systems solutions, develop technology platforms, joint standards and norms.

Scientific, technological, economic and political aspects are closely related to each other when the case is made for further strengthening the links between Europe and Australia. The traditionally intense personal and political relations go hand in hand with the economic interests, closely intertwined despite existing rivalries:

Europe is Australia's biggest trading partner, ahead of the USA, Japan and the ASEAN countries. In view of the expanding European internal market and ongoing high growth rates on the Australian side, prospects for the future of this economic partnership are highly promising.

3. FEAST

Its mission, structure, resources and working mechanisms

3.1. *The initiative*

The Forum for European-Australian Science and Technology Cooperation was launched in August 2000 as an initiative of the then French EU Presidency and established jointly by Australia and the European Union. FEAST developed initially as a web-based information and partner search facility, since 2002 it has supported an office located in Canberra paid for by the EC grant (DEST Funds are exclusively used for promotion and awareness raising activities).

The first major forum “**FEAST 1**” was held in May 2001 with Ministerial level attendance and delegates from all countries involved. Opening the forum, the Australian Minister of Science announced an AUD 750.000 fund earmarked exclusively for cooperation between Australia and the EU. A second major conference “Networking for Excellence” was held in November 2003 and attracted a large number of political and research representatives from Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

3.2. *Mission and objectives*

FEAST is intended to link Australia closer to the European Research Area and to develop active networks between both research communities, building on those many researchers who have gained training or work experience on the other continent or are still living and working in the partner communities. Its mission is to help develop a culture of close collaboration in science, technology and innovation, of personal contacts and exchanges, and to maximise the joint benefits of such cooperation.

The agreed objectives of FEAST are to:

- highlight existing multilateral and bilateral science and technology cooperation between Europe and Australia; and
- improve this cooperation, particularly multilateral cooperation, through identifying priorities and enhancing the quality, quantity and visibility of future action, and specifically,

by establishing an on-going electronic forum and holding physical meetings, to:

- increase the links between European and Australian scientists, and between European scientists, and help them forge links with relevant institutions;
- better identify and demonstrate cooperation between Europe and Australia;
- better provide information, on a mutual basis, on the S&T of the countries concerned;
- better provide information on programs and funding to promote cooperation between Europe and Australia; and
- exchange best practices; draft and present in particular fields the state of the art and the prospects for cooperation.

While FEAST refers to “Science and Technology”, it is understood by the partners that its scope is to include the humanities, social sciences, industrial research and innovation, in compliance with the S&T Agreement between the EU and Australia.

3.3. Organisational structure and governance

Being a “concerted initiative” of several stakeholders with an information, mediator and support mission FEAST is conceived as a lean body and an unincorporated entity. Its activities are run by an **Executive Manager** who works part time and a full time project assistant. Other staff are hired as needed. Finances and employment contracts are managed by the Alliance Francaise (Canberra) on a contract basis, elected by the EC in consensus with DEST.

The **Executive Board** is the primary management authority for FEAST, meeting every month and acting as a Board of Directors with associated rights and responsibilities. Its membership consists of an equal number of Australian and European representatives as follows:

Australian	DEST representative ARC representative ARC representative Academies representative
European	EC Delegation representative Current EU Presidency Future EU Presidency
FEAST	Executive Manager of FEAST
Ex-officio member	Alliance Francaise (for advice on contractual issues)

A **Joint Advisory Group**, meeting twice a year, ensures the involvement of all the stakeholders. Because the interest in FEAST is high across all sections of the Australian S&T community, this group is consequently much larger than the Executive Committee.

- Representatives from each EU Mission in Australia

- Australian research community representatives
- Representatives of Australian funding and relevant policy agencies

Each year the FEAST office produces a **Business Plan** setting the goals for the forthcoming year for examination and approval by the Executive Board as well as a draft budget. At the end of the year a **Periodic Report** is presented to the main financiers giving account of the progress against agreed deliverables for FEAST and its financial situation.

3.4. Funding

The financial resources of FEAST come from different sources, the European Commission and the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training being the financiers of the core budget:

- An EC grant of 250.000 € (approximately \$AU 440.000 at 2001 exchange rates) over three years (20002-2004) covers mainly the costs of the small office staff.
- A grant of \$AU 150.000 from the former Australian Department of Industry, Science and Training and now of DEST supports FEAST activities. (DEST have since contributed far more than this over the three year period. The funding of a FEAST presence at the launch of FP6 amounted to over \$AU 200.000 alone.)

Further support for FEAST awareness programmes and events comes from European missions in Australia and from Australian agencies including research bodies, the learned academies and government departments.

The total annual budget (in terms of actual expenditure) amounted to

AU\$ 43.356 = € 26.013 in 2001 initial establishment and operating costs
 AU\$ 199.782 = € 119.869 in 2002
 AU\$ 200.507 = € 120.304 in 2003.

The budget estimate for the year 2004 was AU\$ 226.300 = € 140.373.

3.5. Office and Staff

The FEAST office is located in Engineering House, Canberra, and supported by the infrastructure of the “Engineers Australia” professional association. The current permanent staff consists of only:

- the Executive Manager (part-time) and
- a Project officer (full-time).

In response to current needs and as far as additional contributions are available

additional staff can be engaged on a temporary basis.

3.6. Instruments and activities

With the objective of encouraging increased levels of S&T cooperation between Australia and Europe, the principal means for interaction and communication with the client and stakeholder base are

- **the Feast website www.feast.org**
offering
 - information and links about existing collaboration (both multilateral and bilateral)
 - information and links about funding sources available for cooperation
 - assistance in forming partnerships and a referral service for specialised advice
 - practical information on exchanges (visas, local customs, education),

and linking to the major Australian portals as well as to CORDIS and to RTD information about EU Member States.

- **an online database**
to be used by registered researchers as a partner search facility and by administrators to disseminate targeted information to relevant parties with a special route to FEAST France and ARIA, the Italian/Australian cooperation network
- **an electronic newsletter**
with various current information and advice, the aim being to publish it regularly every two months
- **e-mail alerts**
on emerging opportunities for cooperation, mainly on calls for grant applications
- **FEAST events**
aimed at identifying priorities for collaboration and enhancing the quality, quantity and visibility of future action:
 - Seminars, workshops and conferences.
Such outreach activities are often linked with major Australian or international meetings.

For planning and underpinning its initiatives the FEAST office builds on special expert working groups with other stakeholders and clients and links into appropriate specialist networks.

4. The assessment of FEAST and what has been achieved

4.1. The reception of FEAST in the Australian research community

At this point, two preliminary remarks have to be made before a proper judgment is possible regarding the limited time and the scarce resources that were available. FEAST started its ambitious work only two years ago.

To bring the Australian and the European research communities closer together is a longer-term process and could in no way be fully accomplished in such a short time span. Secondly, the resources attributed to the project were relatively small and, compared to the objectives set, insufficient so that nearly impossible choices had to be made (e.g. whether a major European-Australian Forum was to be organized at the expense of the further development of the website and the online database).

Given these constraints, it is astounding that so much has been achieved in this start up phase. On the other hand it has to be made all the more clear where progress is still lacking and which objectives have to be adjusted or redefined.

The echo FEAST receives in the Australian research landscape is mixed but predominantly positive, partly enthusiastic. FEAST is seen as a “highly welcome and appropriate vehicle” to strengthen the links with European research, “unique as a platform for information and communication” and “particularly needed in Australia”, a smaller research community still having to fight with its remoteness from other world research clusters. The relations to Europe are manifold but there is plenty of room to intensify them and here FEAST has already helped a lot.

“Europe could do better”, it is said, when it comes to Australian activity and support of international cooperation in S&T. “FEAST opens doors to the European Research Area” which, in a perspective from overseas is still fragmented and lacks transparency. So, FEAST is not only a chance for Australia to have one elaborated access to this complex partner community, e. g. compared to the United States.

It is also considered as an opportunity for Europe to present itself in Australia and to market its attractiveness as a partner in higher education, research and innovation. The initiative “helped to raise Europe’s image” in S&T and to make the concept of ERA known in Australia and beyond, in its neighbourhood. According to the Academies FEAST is seen as particularly positive by young researchers whom they had assisted to participate in FEAST events.

Those who are in close contact with FEAST say it “exceeded expectations” and has acquired a rather high visibility, but they and others criticise at the same time that “knowledge about FEAST in Australia is still patchy” and that a lot remains to be done for better awareness raising. “FEAST has to become more pro-active and go out of Canberra” to market its potential in universities and research institutes all over the

country, also at the leadership level of associations in research, higher education and industry.

It is seen as crucial that, on both sides, researchers, governments and funding agencies make more use of the possibilities offered, joining resources to get to a greater number and to a higher quality of cooperative projects and networks. In these “both, Europe and Australia, have to invest more”, the secret of success is that “gaining and giving are in balance”. One of the key requirements for bringing about more substantial projects is that “funding procedures become better synchronized” and that there is a readiness to reward efforts for bilateral and multilateral collaboration and networking.

Researchers, it is said, still prefer bilateral cooperation, but FEAST can help to overcome the barriers to multilateral schemes, particularly to the EU Framework Programme. For that, not only data bases are needed but also a “human help desk”, giving practical advice on very concrete, seemingly minor issues that can hinder projects to emerge. “FEAST has to help through complexities that bigger projects face”, on the Australian as well as on the European side. Better navigation to the EU-FP remains a challenge and it is seen to be in the interest of both partners, the Australian as well as the European side.

The work of FEAST and its potential, it is stressed, have to be regarded in the broader context of Australian-European relations. Both research communities are highly attracted by the United States. Many of their researchers made their early-career experience on the American continent. It is, therefore, crucial that mobility and exchange schemes on student, PhD and post-doc levels become further developed so that intense personal relations will create the basis for co-initiatives at later stages

In this respect the opportunities which the EU Marie Curie fellowships offer are highly praised as well as national schemes on the Australian as well as the European side (exchange networks of Britain, France and Italy, for example, and also that of the German Humboldt-Foundation).

There is a clear deficiency when it comes to the involvement of business and industry, and particularly of SME's and young enterprises, in S&T cooperation. Here, specific efforts, encouragement and information work are needed, but the main prerequisite is seen in, firstly, increased entrepreneurial R&D investment and, secondly a more intense participation of firms in joint industry-science projects, on national and on European level.

The general expectation is that FEAST should continue and even intensify its work as anything else would be seen as a step backwards and as a wrong sign at times of internationalisation. But FEAST has to become more pro-active and effective in supporting initiatives to cooperate with European research partners and start exchanges. It is understood, and in the end accepted, by the research community that FEAST is no funding agency but it was criticised that it has to work on a too small resource basis: “There is a difference between being lean or meagre”.

The proposal was made that FEAST should have some small seed means to support preparatory contacts and visits assisting the development of joint initiatives. The website and database should be made “more attractive, informative and up-to-date”. And very often it was expressed that FEAST should give also practical help for entering EU FP activities.

In the interviews high praise was accorded to the specific efforts and concrete support activities undertaken by the very active science counsellors of France and Italy to intensify bilateral cooperation and exchanges and to promote network building among respectively the French/Australian and Italian/Australian research communities. FEAST-France and ARIA, the Association for Research between Italy and Australia, are considered as models for using the FEAST platform actively for bilateral purposes. FEAST was, in fact, primarily a French initiative during the country’s presidency in 2000/2001.

4.2. What has been achieved so far, where have objectives not been reached

(i) Within a little more than two years the **pilot project has clearly achieved progress** with regard to many of the objectives set:

- There is a **growing awareness** of the value of closer cooperation in S&T between Europe and Australia, within the Australian research community but also on agency and policy level in Australia and Europe. Mutual information about strategies, priorities, funding mechanisms, modes of cooperation and exchange schemes has improved. Through its website, newsletters, conferences, workshops and seminars FEAST has significantly improved the knowledge base about new developments - goals, reforms, programmes and new instruments – on Community and on national level, even though awareness building is still on the way.

(In February 2004 there were over 50.000 hits on the FEAST website and over 3.000 sessions, but figures vary very much over the year. The number of registered FEAST members receiving the newsletter and e-mail alerts amounts to 2.873 in April 2004. Of these, 1.891 have joined the partner search database representing 1.235 from Australia, but only 656 from all over Europe, of these 349 from France, as FEAST France is using the database actively.)

- The two **FEAST international conferences** in 2001 and 2003 have intensified the policy dialogue and they obviously had a considerable impact on the Australian research community, including those Europeans doing research in Australia, and gave a new impetus to take initiatives towards and strengthen networks with Europe.
- FEAST and its internet address www.feast.org have become a **label** for the attractiveness of S&T collaboration with the European Research

Area – this is to be valued in the context of increasing international competition and, at the same time, world-wide network building in R&D.

- The **FEAST newsletter** has become an extremely helpful information source for Australian-European cooperation (Latest news, future events, grant highlights, other news), however, it cannot yet be published monthly). **E-mail alerts** inform mainly about new calls for project proposals at the European or national levels.
- **Young researchers** have turned out to be the most important and receptive **target group** of FEAST information work. Their echo to FEAST conferences and workshops, in which some could participate with the help of the Australian Academies, was surprise at the scale of hitherto unknown opportunities, frequently enthusiasm and a great open-mindedness to the possibilities for cooperation and exchanges.
- **Thematically-oriented workshops**, started in 2003, the year 2002 having been used mainly for general awareness raising activities. They have proven to be a highly effective instrument for bringing Australian and European researchers closer together for working on joint networks and projects, the one on **Nanotechnology** being an outstanding example with increasing interaction developing particularly through the Nano2Life Network of Excellence.
Other FEAST joint Australia-Europe workshops in November 2003 covered the themes of:

- **Innovative solutions to drive agricultural sustainability**
- **ICT as an enabling science**
- **Life Sciences, Genomics and Biotechnology for Health**

and resulted in several expressions of intent to cooperate both bilaterally and through the FP. However it is too early at this stage to identify concrete outcomes in terms of applications for project or network support.

- FEAST has instigated a lot of **personal initiative and pioneer work**, as a model for active and successful international communication and collaboration over far distances, on which both sides can build for the future.

(ii) In other respects **objectives have not been reached or there was only minor progress:**

- The **online database** was not much used for **partner search**. Here, the expectations have been unrealistic. In most fields, researchers know their peers with whom they are keen to collaborate. And secondly, at least on the European side but also in Australia, the FEAST database was not sufficiently well known and utilized to make such an “intercontinental market place for research collaboration” work, and it is

very likely that this will not change dramatically. The purpose of the database has to be re-defined and the potential offered by CORDIS, the EC website and database, to be taken into account.

- New ways have to be found to **address researchers in Europe**, to make them known with the potential of FEAST and to make them more open-minded for cooperation with Australian partners.
- FEAST is not sufficiently utilized by **business and industry** for intensifying their R&D connections with Europe, for various reasons (relatively low level of enterprise R&D activities in Australia, a low level of SME involvement in international R&D cooperation, EU FP often not considered as appropriate and accessible for international cooperation, availability of other networking facilities, in particular IMS). With support from DITR, FEAST has undertaken consultations with business and industry and is working to become more attractive to their needs.
- FEAST has not coped and, given its limited resources, it could not cope with the need **for personal information and practical assistance** in addition to the information offered electronically.

(iii) Whether FEAST has already led to more and in particular to more substantial **research cooperation via projects and networks**, is not an easy question to answer.

Australia's involvement in Framework Programme activities dates back to 1994 with the signing of the S&T agreement with the EU. A study by the EC Delegation of the participation under FP4 (1994-1998) and FP5 (1998-2002) shows that the number of projects remained fairly constant but there was a major increase in the value and size of projects with Australian participation, the most active project areas were medical and health research, information technologies and environment. Under FP5, 152 participants from Australia took part in 139 submitted proposals.

As response to the first calls for proposals for FP 6 (2002-2006) there was already a comparatively high number of submitted proposals with Australian participation (up to September 2003 120 applications, involving in total 142 Australian participants), but the selection process is partly still underway. Main areas of Australian interest are now in the programme areas Information society technologies, Sustainable development, global change and ecosystems, Nanotechnologies, multifunctional materials and new production processes as well as Life science, genomics and biotechnology for health.

40 proposals were for Integrated Projects, 14 for Networks of excellence and 18 for traditional Specific Targeted Research Projects, whereas 35 applications were for incoming and outgoing Marie Curie Research fellowships. The range of thematically targeted workshops, organized in 2003, could certainly not yet have an impact on Australian/European proposals in response to the first calls which started in December 2002.

Most scientific proposals were submitted by CSIRO, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Organisation, and strongly represented is also a group of Australian universities, namely the University of Sydney, the Australian National University in Canberra, the University of Melbourne, the University of New South Wales and the University of Technology, Sydney.

More up-to-date figures and results are presently collected in the EC and will be incorporated later. It is to be added here that statistics on EU international cooperation seem to be poorly developed, patchy and not available up-to-date. In view of an increasing involvement of third countries in EU S&T activities this situation is no longer justifiable.

Because of the change of instruments (to Integrated projects and Networks of excellence) figures, Australia's participation in FP6 will not be easily comparable with that in FP 4 and 5. And it has to be added that a presumably high rejection rate as a result of the first calls might lead to disappointment, not only in Australia. It has been discussed in the Australian research community, too, whether a two-step application and selection procedure could help to avoid unnecessary investment by applicants, fruitless activity that is very much criticized in the R&D world, including the enterprise sector.

For the future process the Allen study registered opportunities for increased collaboration in research, development and training in the fields of:

- Health, in particular, disease and the ageing population;
- Sustainable development, incl. climate change, biodiversity, land and water management;
- Emerging technologies, such as biotechnology and nanotechnology; and
- ICT solutions for business.

It is assumed that the ARC's recent Research Networks initiative together with the development of Networks of excellence in Europe will tighten the linkages in discipline areas and speed up the flow of information about R&D capabilities in each region.

On bilateral cooperation there are very few statistics, but it is documented that the special efforts of FEAST France and of ARIA, underpinned by unilaterally or bilaterally financed support schemes, have led to an impressive range of new project initiatives, exchanges and networks.

5.

Options for the future and interim conclusion

5.1. *The options*

- **Closing FEAST by the end of 2004**

The project had been given high symbolic value on the political level. FEAST was conceived as a three years pilot project but its mission is of a longer term. Time was too short and resources invested too limited to bring such an ambitious project to full effect and to reach more tangible outcomes. Dismantling the networks and client groups established by FEAST would close off a promising initiative with demonstrated outcomes and further potential to raise awareness and encourage mutually beneficial cooperation consistent with the EU concept of international openness in S&T. The EU and its Member States would lose a gateway into Australian Science and Technology and an opportunity for marketing in the Asian–pacific region. Australia would give up a helpful tool to link itself closer with the emerging European Research Area. So, this is an option hardly to be justified.

- **Going on with FEAST as it is for another 3 years**

Both initiators conceived FEAST as an innovative pilot project for a limited term. After the first three year phase there is some basis from which to assess what has worked and what should be re-designed. FEAST has to concentrate its activities on fields where it is unique and of real help to researchers and agencies. On its present resource basis FEAST is not able to work satisfactorily.

- **Expanding the project for a second phase of 4 years, but with re-defined objectives and adequate resources**

This strategy requires that all partners – the Australian Government, the European Community but also its Member States:

- re-confirm explicitly their will for closer transcontinental cooperation in S&T, making full use of the support which FEAST as a unique catalyst can provide, and
- that they agree on re-defined objectives and on the level of resources to be granted in order to ensure the future viability of FEAST for the next phase.

- **Extension of FEAST to Europe**

At the start of the FEAST project it had not been clarified to what extent and how FEAST should reach out to Europe to pursue its objectives. There are a number of good reasons, mainly the limited resources, that speak for restricting FEAST physically to Australia, i. e. its office and quite predominantly also its physical events. A branch office in Brussels would

not be able to serve the potentially interested clients in the 25 European Member States. On the other hand, the future Education and Science Counsellor at the Australian Delegation in Brussels will look after the Australian interests vis-à-vis the European Union and can act as transmitter not only to the Australian Departments but also to FEAST Canberra. FEAST's electronic instruments, however, website, newsletter and database, should be marketed more actively in Europe, and here CORDIS can help as well as the new Science Counsellor in Brussels and the Australian Europe Centre in Berlin.

5.2. Interim conclusion:

FEAST should be continued, but only if certain conditions are granted

By launching FEAST as a “**Focus for linking Australia and Europe in research**” (Greg Tegart, ANU) both sides have taken an initiative of key importance, at a time when nearly all international players are redefining their R&D strategies, declaring investment in S&T and in education as top priorities and developing anew their position as competitors, but also as partners on the international scene. Stopping FEAST by the end of 2004 would send the wrong signals, it would lead to disappointment in the research community and would mean a lost opportunity in times of internationalisation of S&T and of the innovation process.

To expect that a pivotal joint undertaking like FEAST could have massive short-term effects in terms of newly funded projects and networks would be unrealistic. FEAST is an enabling activity but has neither a steering role nor does it have funding instruments of its own. It has a catalyst function, instigating initiatives to be developed bottom-up by researchers responding to the opportunities opened to them and, given their relevance and excellence, to be supported from the funding agencies of both sides. All indicators available show, however, that, in the medium and longer term, the joint project will have a highly stimulating impact on European-Australian relations in science and technology: the interest in the FEAST website, the development of membership (though not yet on the European side), the active participation in conferences, seminars and workshops as well as many partnerships that have become active on a personal and/or institutional bases.

With the existence of FEAST, Australia and the European Community have created a unique platform and an appropriate tool to underpin and drive their cooperation in S&T and to fill their Joint Agreement with life. European Member States should recognise FEAST as a vehicle to present themselves in Australia, a remote partner country where most of them have no specialised science counsellors at their embassies, a country however with a considerable and growing research potential that can help to open gateways to the whole Asian-pacific region. However, both partners, Europeans like Australians, should draw the lessons to be learned from the first project stage and set clear priorities and targets for a second phase FEAST II.

6.

Recommendations (1)

Mission, objectives and guidelines for FEAST II **(second phase of the joint European/Australian forum)**

(Preliminary remark: FEAST II would not start at point zero. In most respects the ground has been laid for a second phase of the project.)

6.1. The mission for FEAST II (2005-2008)

- **Promotion of European-Australian collaboration, networking and exchanges in S&T at multilateral and bilateral level,**
- **stimulation of concrete project and network building on promising research themes of mutual priority,**
- **awareness raising of the opportunities offered by the EU FP, and**
- **practical advice and assistance to Australian researchers willing to cooperate with European partners**

through:

- **information and communication services via internet and on site**
- **marketing of successful cooperation activities**
- **support of contacts and network building**
- **organization of workshops on priority themes**
- **a help desk for access to EU FP and to promotion schemes for bilateral cooperation and exchanges**
- **a Forum for European-Australian policy dialogue on S&T.**

6.2. Tasks and objectives in detail

- **Information and communication services via internet and on site**
An ongoing, easily accessible, more user-friendly and up-to-date **website** with the core elements:
 - **Information and links on existing collaboration in programmes, clusters, projects or networks (partly to be delivered by Member States, see below); Information and links on funding sources and other support schemes for collaboration and exchanges (partly to be delivered by Member States, see below)**
 - **Navigation, whenever useful, to the CORDIS information base (CORDIS is already well known and much used by Australians, the expectation being that it be made more user-friendly, too)**

- Practical information on exchanges (visa, local customs, educational questions, etc.)
- Synthesised S&T information of European countries and Australia
European Member States should use this as their **showcase to the Australian research community**, to Australian agencies and departments, offering them direct links to their national research portals. Input and regular up-dating of information should be the responsibility of ministries or agencies at home, of the “International Desk for cooperation with Australia”. The presentations of Member States can build on that which they produce for CORDIS, but adapted and enriched according to Australian interests.

An electronic **newsletter** and **e-mail alerts** to registered users.

The highly informative newsletter should be published monthly, with a small printed edition for marketing FEAST. Prompt information on new calls via e-mail alerts is crucial.

An **online database**.

for **FEAST discussion groups** on conceptual initiatives and the preparation of FEAST events and for **bilateral networks**

(to be utilized by Member States, like the model of FEAST France which uses the database as a tool for identifying and contacting researchers around Australia but also in France, interested in French-Australian cooperation; or by networks like the alumni of Marie Curie Fellowships and the German Alexander-von-Humboldt-Foundation)

The idea of a **FEAST partner search facility** should be dropped. Instead, interested researchers should be led to the **CORDIS database** if they look for partners active in EU projects or networks, and it should be recommended to them to register with their personal profile and research interest. In addition, CORDIS could install a “European/Australian corner” to be highlighted in the information section on international cooperation.

Presentations and Seminars to inform on site, in Australian universities, research institutes and agencies, about possibilities for collaboration and the utilization of FEAST and CORDIS; but also to gather ideas for new initiatives

- **Marketing of successful cooperation activities**

Concrete examples of successfully finished projects and newly started Integrated projects or Networks of excellence, particularly those with Australian participation, are to be presented for encouraging researchers, institutes and enterprises to participate in FP activities.

For many, and not only in Australia, the EU FP is still a black box, abstract and remote. Others, with their European partners in science and/or industry, abstain from taking the road to Brussels for fear of too arduous and drawn out procedures and too many, and partly artificial, requirements to be met by projects. It is, therefore, crucial to **highlight good examples** and to make it possible that successful pioneers on the Australian side can be consulted. Here, the EC has to help with input, as well as Member States and national funding agencies in their field of responsibility.

- **Support of contacts and network building**

Contacts and network building should be supported with the clear aim to promote concrete initiatives for joint projects, networks of excellence and training and exchange schemes between individual researchers or institutions, including conceptual work on thematic workshops and follow-up activities (**FEAST Thematic Groups**). For this task FEAST should use its online database but should also be able to convene meetings and support teams to collaborate.

- **Organization of workshops on priority themes**

The preparation, organization and exploitation of Euro/Australian workshops on R&D themes of mutual interest and top priority (**FEAST workshops**) should become one of the main tasks and tools of FEAST. This should be done either on behalf of the DEST and the European Commission – as a result of agreements in the Joint S&T Cooperation Committee – or on FEAST’s own initiative, with the approval of the Executive Board and always in connection with an appropriate partner institution (funding council, other agency, learned academy, university, or scientific and/or economic association). For each thematic workshop FEAST should try to win two competent experts, one “champion” responsible on the Australian and one on the European side.

A range of themes have been proposed for further workshops, worthy to be pursued with the aim of defining priorities for project collaboration and networking, i. a.:

Neurosciences, stem cell research, consequences of climate change, water management and a follow-up to the very successful workshop on nanotechnology. As agreed with the EC the DEST has issued a call for proposals and, as at the time of writing, had received 29 responses from the Australian S&T community. As a rule, such workshops should be held twice, but at least once a year and under the common umbrella of FEAST.

- **Information and help desk for access to EU FP and to support schemes for bilateral cooperation and exchanges**

This activity would respond to an expectation towards FEAST that seems to be widely shared and was frequently expressed in the interviews with representatives from the Australian research community. Although Australia is not an associated partner to the FP and decisions for co-financing are only taken case-by-case related to single projects and networks, the interest to embark on European programmes and networks is increasing and, in consequence, the need for practical information and support.

An information and help desk should cooperate closely with **National Contact Points** in EU Member States and it could help research institutes and enterprises with partner search. The information desk should also be able to answer questions and give guidance related to national and bilateral funding schemes. Finally, it could show the way when advice is

needed on mobility and exchange issues related to Europe (cooperating with the newly created **European Mobility Network**).

- **FEAST Policy Dialogue on European-Australian S&T Cooperation**
FEAST Australian-European Conferences marked the political start of the joint initiative and gave it the necessary drive forward. They contributed successfully to the awareness FEAST has acquired already in the Australian S&T community. On the other hand, such bigger meetings require a lot of resources and preparatory input.

It is proposed that in the future, too, a larger conference, a **policy dialogue on European-Australian S&T cooperation**, is held every two years under the label of FEAST, always back to back with one or two thematic workshops as has been done successfully with the last Canberra conference “Networking for Excellence” in 2003.

The conferences should be targeted at two themes: Firstly, a dialogue about new challenges and approaches to national, international and multilateral S&T policy and, secondly, priorities and ways to intensify European-Australian S&T relations in a world-wide perspective. It is proposed to hold every second **FEAST Policy Dialogue** in Europe, starting with Brussels. This would lead to a higher awareness and participation from European countries (government representatives, funding councils, S&T associations, exchange organizations, business and industry) and it should be used for presentations of the Australian S&T potential to Europe.

6.3. Organization and affiliation of FEAST II and funding mechanisms

Realistically, FEAST will remain, for the time being, a project-based initiative, financed for a limited (3 or better: 4 year) period. However, both main partners, the European Commission and the Australian Government should see and treat it as an entity with a longer-term task: to stimulate practical collaboration and exchanges in science and technology, thus underpinning the Joint Agreement between Australia and the European Union, and, at the same time, to support bilateral relations between Australian and European Member States.

Financing FEAST through the Alliance Française as contract partner has worked and could well be continued. As long as FEAST is supported on a project basis, it has to be ensured by the EC, and in future possibly also by the Australian co-financier, that enough liquidity is available for paying salaries and other expenses in time. This is not guaranteed when the EC is paying grant funds in arrears.

In the longer term, establishing FEAST as a legal entity in its own right could be more beneficial, solve many practical problems and enable FEAST to become self-sustaining.

(So far FEAST cannot own equipment, rent offices, establish contracts or apply for grants on its own, issues that will have to be tackled earlier or later, surely for a phase FEAST III.)

The local and institutional affiliation, however, should be re-examined before going on to the next phase, FEAST II. It seems to be of prime importance that FEAST is closely linked with the Australian research scene, has best possible access to all players in R&D (universities and research institutes, self-governing associations, agencies and departments as well as the R&D active enterprise sector) and, last but not least, that it receives infrastructural and conceptual support from an institution working in a similar field. There are various alternatives to be checked, among others the Australian Academy of Science and the ANU with its National Europe Centre, both in Canberra. Such a decision on the future affiliation of FEAST can only be taken after careful examination and discussions with possible partner institutions, about their appropriateness to take over such a role and their readiness to embark on a cooperative effort that goes beyond their original mission.

Integration into a Government Department does not seem to be an option as FEAST has a service function and is not a ministerial task.

6.4. Resources and staff

FEAST should remain a lean and flexible body with a small office working mainly through electronic media. However, to be able to cope with its tasks FEAST requires a minimum of permanent staff, i.e. for the full term of the project, comprehending at least 4 fully employed persons:

- an Executive Manager with competencies for planning, expanding links with the academic, industry, regional and government sectors, and marketing (outreach and awareness raising activities)
- a versatile project officer and webmaster
- a knowledgeable and communicative help desk assistant, also contributing to newsletter and e-mail alerts on calls
- a secretary with administrative, planning and organizational skills.

For the organisation of events additional personal have to be employed, as it is done already, on a short-term basis, out of project funds.

FEAST should become equipped with a limited fund enabling it to pay for visits and meetings of researchers and research managers and for preparing FEAST initiatives and events.

The staff and running costs should be co-funded by the European Union (also on behalf of Member States) and Australia at a fixed proportion (proposal: 1:1, alternatively 2:1, depending on the readiness for giving additional grants). All in all, funding from both sides should be roughly balanced.

Australia, the European Commission and European Member States should be ready to grant additional money for concrete projects, but FEAST should also apply for support to funding councils and business organizations.

On the European side it has to be clarified whether a co-funding of FEAST's institutional costs by all 25 Member States is to be foreseen. For reasons of practicability this should be avoided and instead the Commission should act also on behalf of Member States. It is, however, important that Member States declare their co-responsibility at Council level and their readiness to support FEAST as a joint initiative through conceptual and information input as well as financial contributions to projects of particular interest to them.

6.5. *Interaction with the Science Counsellor in Brussels*

The installation of an Education and Science Counsellor, as planned by the Australian Government, is a great opportunity also for FEAST to get better and more up-to-date information and to have face-to-face contact with the European Commission, with Science Counsellors from European member countries as well as with representatives of S&T associations and agencies from all over Europe in Brussels. On the other hand, the Science Counsellor should also see and use FEAST as a means to disseminate information on Australian and European collaboration broadly and directly to the Australian R&D community. Such a combination of efforts and, at the same time, a clear division of roles has to be ensured on the Australian side and needs the backing of DEST.

7. The broader context

Further framework conditions for stimulating European-Australian cooperation in S&T

FEAST is an important, but not the only, instrument to boost European-Australian relations in S&T. Other steps are needed in order to get to new quantities and qualities of cooperation and links. The following seem to be **key factors**:

- a better synchronisation of and real flexibility in funding procedures - a problem and challenge in all non-institutionalised international cooperation. In principle, harmonisation and more flexibility are pursued, however rules are often treated in a restrictive way, hindering quick funding decisions supportive of international projects and networks;
- the application of coordinated or joint calls for proposals in exceptional cases; they would be a great step forward and should be tested in special areas of highest priority for both sides (with regard to European on EU as well as on Member State level)
- travel grants for preparatory visits and meetings, also to young researchers who are not yet disposing of a project grant
- fostering mobility between Australia and Europe and developing joint training schemes for graduate students and PhD students, if possible leading to joint degrees.

8.

Recommendations (2)

FEAST as a model for European cooperation with other third countries and world regions

The importance of the knowledge economy and of S&T to the future of our societies and globally provide imperatives to support and supplement existing avenues for developing international collaboration in research and development. As a link between the EU and Australia for closer cooperation and networking, FEAST may be seen as an appropriate model for intensifying relations with other industrialised partner countries. This review has concluded that the experience, gained in the first phase of this joint European/Australian initiative is, overall, positive and that, with some modifications, it is justified and advisable to continue it with the Australian partner and to move to a further developed phase II.

FEAST is a window from Australia to Europe and from Europe towards Australia for knowing more about each other, about the potential, main activities, new approaches and support programmes in S&T as well as opportunities for international collaboration. And it is a bridge and common platform on which research actors can meet more easily and jointly build projects, longer-term networks and clusters on a bilateral basis or multilaterally, mainly through the EU FP. The proposed Phase II is intended to build FEAST into a widely known, accepted and searched for "one-stop-shop" for information, communication and contact promotion: the "S&T market place" between Australia and Europe.

The main prerequisite therefore for establishing an initiative like FEAST in and with a third country is that there is a **basic interest** on both sides **and a firm will**, on political level as well as in the research community, **to join forces**

- for tackling common economical, environmental and societal problems through cooperation in S&T,
- for mobilising scarce resources to achieve critical mass for major research efforts,
- for making active use of complementary facilities and special research conditions on each partner's side
- for raising the innovation potential and opening new markets through collaboration involving business and industry
- for enabling and promoting more mobility of young researchers as a basis for long-term connections and networking.

Only if such a strong mutual interest is given, there will be a sustained readiness to undertake the considerable investment of political, personal and financial resources and of time that a joint undertaking like FEAST requires. It is important to stress that such a forum cannot stand alone to develop the international scene: **it has to support a fully-fledged strategy for internationalisation but cannot replace it.**

On the side of the EU it has **to be clarified at Council level if Member States are interested and willing to participate actively in such fora** as jointly utilised cooperation frameworks with third partners. As important as it is, an increased opening of the EU FP to other world regions, alone can hardly justify the investment required. Apart from the FP and the big multilaterally organized European labs like CERN nearly 90 % of S&T activities in Europe are still managed and financed on the national level.

Through a joint initiative like FEAST, third partner countries will expect to gain eased access to the whole European research landscape in an enlarged Europe. On the other hand, it is **also in the interest of European countries**, including the newly acceding States **to be fully present and actively involved** in a FEAST-like internationally oriented initiative for collaboration, for information, communication and networking with important countries in other world regions. It is to be assumed that such an interest is particularly given in relation to third countries with a strong research base that are geographically remote and where most Member States are not represented by specialised scientific counsellors at their embassies.

Before deciding to embark on initiatives for Fora like FEAST with other third countries the following **check list** should be gone through:

- Degree of interest in closer cooperation on the partner side
- Degree of interest at Community and at Member State level
- Mission and concrete tasks and objectives of Forum
- Minimum resources a Forum would require
- Readiness on both sides to share the current costs
- Readiness to pay for single events, workshops, seminars and other activities
- Existence of Funds/Programmes open for co-financing research projects and networks on either side
- For underpinning the cooperation: existence of mobility schemes to enable young researchers to gain experience in the partner region.

and last but not least:

- Is there a strong expectation in the R&D community for closer collaboration and a willingness to engage themselves in contact building and networking? Will there be “champions” (on the ground level of public research and in the R&D active enterprise sector) to take a lead role and to make active use of the opportunities offered?

References

- FEAST website www.feast.org (e-mails to info@feast.org)
- Allen Consulting: International Science and Technology Best Practice, a new study commissioned by the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training
- Robin Batterham, Chief Scientist: Government, Priorities and Drivers – Presentation to the Minerals Industry Vice Presidents Technology Forum 2004, Melbourne
- Commonwealth of Australia: Mapping Australian Science & Innovation – Summary Report, 2003
- European Commission: Accompanying measures to support the international dimension of the European research area, EUR 20817, Bruxelles 2003
- European Commission: A worldwide vision for European research, EUR 20874, Bruxelles 2003
- Brendon Nelson, MP, Minister for Education, Science and Training: Address to the National Press Club, March 24, 2004, on new studies to underpin Australian S&T policy, see also www.dest.gov.au
- Michael Parker: FEAST – A new model for international cooperation in science, technology and innovation, to be presented at the forthcoming IMS International Forum, May 2004
- Gérard Siclet (Secrétaire Générale de l'Association française de coopération en recherche industrielle avec l'Australie): L'Australie, un paradis pour la science, La Jaune et la Rouge, Février 2004
- Greg Tegart: Collaboration and networking – European and Australian experience, plenary address to FEAST 4, Nov. 2003 (available via FEAST website)

European Commission

Forum on European-Australian Science and Technology cooperation (FEAST) - Assessment Report

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2004 — 34 pp. — 21.0 x 29.7 cm

FEAST is a joint European-Australian initiative aimed at identifying, supporting and strengthening linkages and cooperative ventures between Australia and Europe in the fields of science and technology. The remit of this review is to evaluate the project, established in 2001 and conceived, as a first step, for the period 2002-2004.

The review comes to the conclusion that Europe and Australia should go on with FEAST, but define a clear new mission, objectives and guidelines for a second phase 2005-2008 and equip the lean body with the minimum of resources required.