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Bureau for EU-Mexican Science and Technology Cooperation, Step II (UEMEXCYT2)

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Autonomous University of
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Institute for Research and
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European Research (APRE, Italy)

International Bureau of the
Federal Ministry of Education and
Research (PT-DLR, Germany)

Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI, Austria)

Research & Innovation Management
Services (RIMS, Belgium)

Centre of Studies for the Relations
between the European Union and
Latin America (CERCAL, Belgium)

Background and objectives

Mexico's major cooperation efforts in science and technology are oriented towards Europe, both through its history and strong tradition of cooperation, close links and exchanges with the Member States, and through the Science and Technology (S&T) Cooperation Agreement with the European Community and its recently adopted Country Strategy Paper (CSP) 2002-2006 through which CONACYT co-financed a cooperation programme in the area of Science and Technology.

Therefore, cooperation with Europe stands out as being most strategic for the internationalisation of Mexican research and technological development activities and interest is placed on evaluating, consolidating and better coordinating existing potential, under the umbrella of the Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement, the foremost instrument of political dialogue between both parties.

The main purpose of the Science and Technology (S&T) Agreement is to 'encourage, develop and facilitate cooperative research and develop activities of common interest in almost all fields of science and technology between Europe and Mexico', on the basis of mutual benefit.

One of the first actions implemented to support the improvement and facilitation of the S&T cooperation between Europe and Mexico, and therefore the achievement of the engagement foreseen in the Agreement, was the launch in 2006 of the Bureau for European and Mexican Science and Technology Cooperation UEMEXCYT, located in CONACYT and co-financed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Technological Development (DG RTD) and CONACYT, for a two-year period.

<http://www.conacyt.mx/uemexcyt>



The UEMEXCYT II project proposes to support the bilateral political dialogue initiated by the S&T Agreement's Joint Steering Committee, providing follow-up and continuity to the efforts carried out by the UEMEXCYT Office as well as improving the channels of communication and partnership between Mexico and the EU Member States. In this context, it was considered important to open the project to a larger consortium composed not only of CONACyT, its coordinator, but also institutions from six EU Member States, notably Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium and Austria, with which Mexico enjoys important bilateral cooperation programmes in science and technology.

Overall strategy

The project UEMEXCYT II will focus on the following main issues:

- setting up a consolidated dialogue between the major stakeholders responsible for the EU-Mexican S&T Cooperation (CONACyT, Mexican Thematic FP7 Contacts, Member States Ministries and National Contact Points (NCP), Commission Services, coordination and support actions such as the INCONET with Latin America, the ERA-NET for Latin America, LAC-ACCESS, etc.);
- evaluating past, present and future collaborations between Mexico and Europe in the S&T sector and proposing ways of optimising the rules and instruments;
- raising awareness, links and training on specific issues;
- generating partnership opportunities between scientific and technological communities from both sides;
- improving the visibility of existing results and potential collaborations between Europe and Mexico in the science and technology sector;
- sharing best practices via joint fora such as workshops to provide information on the current situation and the prospects for cooperation in particular fields.

Implementation and dissemination activities

The implementation of the project will be ensured through the following work packages (WPs).

WP1: Raising awareness and links between Europe and Mexico

- Identifying and forming suitable research partnerships between Mexico and European partners interested in cooperating with Mexico (mapping, partner search and grant schemes for project generation);
- Improving the process of providing information on programmes and funding designed to promote cooperation between Europe and Mexico (training plan, info-days and individualised coaching sessions);
- EU-Mexican S&T website and visibility.

WP2: Achieving the S&T Agreement's objectives on horizontal issues

- Monitoring the S&T Agreement's activities (analysis and recommendations);
- Analysis and proposal of improved support and financing mechanisms to strengthen S&T Agreement's objectives.

WP3: Definition of future thematic priorities by Europe-Mexican Thematic Working Groups

- Preparation of Thematic Working Groups;
- Direct support and follow-up to Thematic Working Groups.

WP4: Fact finding missions in priority areas and organisation of action plans

- Organisation and realisation of two fact finding missions (one in Europe and one in Mexico);
- Formulation and follow-up of an Action Plan.

WP5: Management and coordination of the Consortium

- Forum (public event) and kick-off meeting of the project (project partners only);
- Project implementation management;
- Financial management of the project.

Expected impact

The main expected impact of the project is to 'Improve S&T cooperation between Europe and Mexico' in terms of quantity, quality and viability and focuses on three issues.

- Provision of access to information on cooperation programmes and on the state and advancement of the scientific and technological collaboration between Europe and Mexico.
- Identifying priorities through the strengths and needs analysis (WP2), the trend studies produced by the thematic working groups, which will suggest to the S&T Joint Steering Committee goals and precise actions to develop, based on the principle of mutual benefit. In addition, the fact finding missions will help to identify medium and long term projects in strategic areas of cooperation through technological supply/demand fora as well as through thematic workshops.
- Identifying the most competitive partnerships: this is a key point to further the quality and quantity of cooperation, since Human Capital is the basis of any action. Identifying and selecting the best partners will be a direct result of the WP1 (thematic mailing lists), WP2 (Identification of best practices), as well as of the previous identification of priorities and of the information obtained in the dialogues and workshops: WP3 (thematic working groups), WP4 (fact finding mission) and WP5 (consortium meetings).

These results, together with the coordination that is usually maintained between CONACyT and EU Member States with which bilateral agreements have been signed, will have a positive impact on the relationship between Europe and Mexico, especially thanks to the identification of the most relevant partners and the availability of relevant information to enhance further cooperation between Europe and Mexico.