

ROADMAP			
TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Association of Georgia to Horizon 2020 Programme		
LEAD DG - RESPONSIBLE UNIT	RTD/C.3	DATE OF ROADMAP	06/2015

This indicative roadmap is provided for information purposes only and is subject to change. It does not prejudge the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content and structure.

A. Context and problem definition

- (1) What is the political context of the initiative?
- (2) How does it relate to past and possible future initiatives, and to other EU policies?
- (3) What ex-post analysis of existing policy has been carried out? What results are relevant for this initiative?

Georgia has signed an Association Agreement with the EU, including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) and a Protocol covering association to EU programmes. This Protocol allows for association of Georgia to various EU programmes on the basis of agreements on specific terms and conditions of such association. Georgia is among the most advanced Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries with regard to political association and economic integration with the EU, together with Moldova and Ukraine.

Implementing signed DCFTAs through association to current EU programmes such as Horizon 2020 are high political priorities strongly supported by the European External Action Service (EEAS). Moldova became associated to Horizon 2020 as of 1 January 2014, while negotiations with Ukraine were concluded in November 2014 for an effective association as of 1 January 2015.

Horizon 2020 Programme promotes international cooperation with third countries based on common interest and mutual benefit. It contributes to achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy to strengthen competitiveness, contribute to tackling societal challenges and support Union external and development policies.

What are the main problems which this initiative will address?

Despite the current scarcity of national research funding, the Georgian STI (Science, Technology and Innovation) capacity is still considered relatively good and competitive taking into account the small size of the country. The Georgian authorities recently launched a number of structural reforms to modernise the national research system (through the merging of 50 research institutes into the country's main universities) and the integration of competitive funding (using peer reviews and bibliometric assessment). The number of publications per 1000 inhabitants is estimated at between 0.33 and 0.48, which is comparable with the ratio for Ukraine (0.52). Regarding interaction with the FP, Georgia has a fully functional network of National Contact Points (NCPs) and 18 NCPs were appointed for Horizon 2020. Important new structures have also been set up to boost the implementation of a sound innovation strategy, such as the GITA (Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency) and the GTTC (Georgian Technology Transfer Centre). It is also worth mentioning that Georgia is ranked 15th worldwide in the World Bank Doing Business 2015 report, as this has strong positive implications for cooperation in the innovation sector.

The association of Georgia to Horizon 2020 is expected to have a major impact on further improving competitiveness of the Georgian STI system and integrating Georgia into the European Research Area, through an increased participation to the programme, and a networking of Georgian STI stakeholders with relevant networks and platforms established at EU level. This will also contribute achieving a Common Knowledge and Innovation Space (CKIS) which is a priority of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Who will be affected by it?

Research and innovation stakeholders in EU and Georgia.

Is EU action justified on grounds of subsidiarity? Why can Member States not achieve the objectives of the proposed action sufficiently by themselves? Can the EU achieve the objectives better?

EU action is fully justified. The agreement will facilitate participation of Georgia's researchers in Horizon 2020. Horizon 2020 is a Union programme fully implemented by the Commission. Member States cannot conclude international agreements covering access to the EU research and innovation programme. Member States have their national programmes for which they remain free to act internationally. However, such unilateral actions of Member States would have impact on national programmes and would not improve participation of Georgian researchers in Horizon 2020.

B. Objectives of the initiative

What are the main policy objectives?

As outlined in the Communication "Enhancing and focusing EU international cooperation in research and innovation: A strategic approach" (COM(2012)497), EFTA countries, EU enlargement countries and countries covered by the European Neighbourhood policy, the focus is on fostering integration into – or alignment with – the European Research Area, including through their possible association to Horizon 2020.

Horizon 2020 is open to association of EaP countries which fulfil the criteria set out in its Art. 7(1).

Do the objectives imply developing EU policy in new areas?

No

C. Options

- (1) What are the policy options (including exemptions/adapted regimes e.g. for SMEs) being considered?
- (2) What legislative or 'soft law' instruments could be considered?
- (3) How do the options respect the proportionality principle?

N/A

D. Initial assessment of impacts

What are the benefits and costs of each of the policy options?

N/A

Could any or all of the options have significant impacts on (i) simplification, (ii) administrative burden and (iii) on relations with other countries, (iv) implementation arrangements? And (v) could any be difficult to transpose for certain Member States?

N/A

- (1) Will an IA be carried out for this initiative and/or possible follow-up initiatives?
- (2) When will the IA work start?
- (3) When will you set up the IA Steering Group and how often will it meet?
- (4) What DGs will be invited?
- (1) The possibility to negotiate and conclude international agreements associating certain third countries to the Horizon 2020 programme is provided for directly in Article 7 of the Horizon 2020 Regulation (No 1291/2013). In a broad sense this policy initiative has already been endorsed by the Council and the EP upon adoption of the Horizon 2020 Regulation. In this context the association agreements should be seen as a policy measure that implements Horizon 2020. Such agreements should also be seen as a measure which further implements the Protocol to the Association Agreement and the general EU policy towards ENP countries (i.e. to open EU programmes to their association). This initiative, therefore, does not need an impact assessment.
- (1) Is any option likely to have impacts on the EU budget above € 5m?
- (2) If so, will this IA serve also as an ex-ante evaluation, as required by the Financial Regulation? If not, provide information about the timing of the ex-ante evaluation.

N/A

E. Evidence base, planning of further work and consultation

- (1) What information and data are already available? Will existing IA and evaluation work be used?
- (2) What further information needs to be gathered, how will this be done (e.g. internally or by an external contractor), and by when?
- (3) What is the timing for the procurement process & the contract for any external contracts that you are planning (e.g. for analytical studies, information gathering, etc.)?
- (4) Is any particular communication or information activity foreseen? If so, what, and by when?
 - Internally, notably through the country specific analysis carried out by DG RTD, the participation of Georgia in the 7th Framework programme (Georgia was the second best performing Eastern Partnership country in FP7) and in Horizon 2020.
 - Externally through the data collected or generated by specific coordination or support actions funded by

the Framework programme.

- Negotiations with Georgia are expected to start in March/April 2015.
- Once negotiations are concluded, preparations will commence for the adoption of the necessary Commission Decision approving the Agreement and authorising its signature.
- Depending on the length of negotiations, adoption of the Commission Decision is foreseen for the 3rd quarter 2015 and signature by both Parties will be arranged shortly thereafter.

Which stakeholders & experts have been or will be consulted, how, and at what stage?

N/A