



Aiming for Better Collaboration

SSH NIPs and NCPs in Third Countries in the European Framework Programme (Milestone 2.4.2)

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**Date: January 2011
(First version 12 May 2009, rev. August 2009, rev. December 2010)**

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NET4SOCIETY is an FP7 project funded by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Aiming for Better Collaboration

The importance of international collaboration has long been acknowledged by the European Union. Research is one of the means for such collaboration, if not the most important of them all. Via the European Framework programmes for Research and Development (FPs), such collaborations are increasingly encouraged. Special programmes, including INCO paved the way to new forms of collaborations such as specific calls (e.g. Collaboration with Russia under theme **ICT**, etc.) and topics (SICA, specifying different parts of the world) are constantly being developed in order to enhance such collaboration.

European research communities are by now well aware and rather experienced in taking advantage of former collaborations in FP consortium building, proposal writing and submission procedures. On the other hand, the researchers from the rest of the world ("Third Countries") often feel "out of the loop" and find it difficult to find European partners, understand and sometimes implement the FPs' rules of participation and are often facing all these difficulties by themselves, with little, if any, assistance.

In former Framework Programmes, Member States and Associated Countries to the FP understood the need of such supporting system. In the Third Countries the situation today varies from countries which have already established an NCP system to countries with no NCPs or one to two NCPs in charge of all the themes and programmes under FP.

NCPs in Third Countries, which are expected to promote the FP and support their researchers' communities, face many challenges.

In this document a broad view on the NCPs situation and environment is provided, with the aim of showing their importance in increasing the success rate of the Third Countries in the Framework Programmes.

Who can benefit from this document:

Policy makers in the EU & Third Countries - Better understanding the complexity of the operation of NIPs and NCPs in Third Countries, and the implications for the Framework Programme.

NCPs in Member & Associated States – Better understanding of the NIPs/NCPs in Third Countries complexities in their on-going relations.

NIPs/NCPs in Third Countries – Observe the systems of Third Countries in their relations with the Framework Programme, and benefit from their experience.

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List of abbreviations

- **EU** – European Union
- **EC** – European Commission
- **FP** – European Framework Programme for Research and Development
- **MS** - EU Member states.
- **AC** – Associated Country = Associated State – Countries with science and technology cooperation agreements that involved contributing to the framework programme budget.
- **Third country** - Countries which are neither Member nor Associated States
 - **ICPC** - International Cooperation Partner Country. An ICPC is an *Third Country* which the European Commission classifies as a low-income, lower-middle-income or upper-middle-income country and which is identified as such in the work programmes. For a full list of ICPCs and the different regions that comprise ICPCs, please refer to Annex A.
- **NCP** – National Contact Point – National official representative to the Framework Programme in member or associated states and in Third Countries
- **NIP** - National Information Point – National official representative to the Framework Programme in Third Countries.

Introduction

Third Countries and the European Union

In March 2000, the [LISBON EUROPEAN COUNCIL](#) (paragraph 44) saw the importance of international cooperation. It intended to pursue proposals on the involvement of third countries and to further develop the EU's relationship with NATO in conformity with the Helsinki European Council conclusions.

The Commission's [Europe 2020 agenda](#), a decade later, took this intention one step further. It mentioned that while Europe needs to address its own structural weaknesses, the world is moving fast and will be very different by the end of the coming decade: the competition from developed and emerging economies is intensifying. Countries such as China or India are investing heavily in research and technology in order to move their industries up the value chain and "leapfrog" into the global economy.

The Commission's agenda also mentioned worldwide issues to be addressed in a worldwide manner, such as climate and resource challenges: The European Union has strong dependencies on fossil fuels and an inefficient use of raw materials. Therefore the EU consumers and businesses are exposed to harmful and costly price shocks. This is threatening EU economic security; EU economies are increasingly interlinked with the rest of the world.

The expansion of the world population from 6 to 9 billion will intensify global competition for natural resources, and put stronger pressure on the environment. The EU must continue its outreach to other parts of the world in pursuit of a worldwide solution to the problems of climate change at the same time as we implement EU agreed climate and energy strategy across the territory of the Union.

The Europe 2020 agenda marked an important destination to be achieved in the research field - ensuring that innovative ideas can be turned into new products and services that create growth, quality jobs and help address European and global societal challenges. To succeed, this must be combined with entrepreneurship, finance, and a focus on user needs and market opportunities, in and outside the Union.

In order for Third Countries, and in particular ICPCs to benefit from the opportunities open for them, it is clear that the development of means of communication with researchers and research institutions from Third Countries is of utmost importance. First, researchers and research institutions in the Third Countries need to be made aware of opportunities under FP7, and how they can participate in the research. Second, researchers and research institutions in Member States and Associated Countries need to be assisted in finding reputable research partners in Third Countries that could participate in a meaningful way in FP7 proposals and projects.

Therefore National Contact Points (NCP) or National Information Points (NIP) in Third Countries, and particularly in ICPC countries, have a dual role to play: To market the EU FP7 to their researchers, and to market their country and researchers to the EU research community.

NIPs and NCPs¹

Under the Fifth and Sixth Framework Programmes, all Member States and Associated Countries have set up systems of National Contact Points (NCP systems). The NCP systems' aim is to inform, assist and provide appropriate information regarding calls for proposals and ongoing projects to potential participants and contractors.

The existing NCP systems in Member and Associated Countries show a wide variety of architectures. They move from highly centralized to decentralized networks, and involve diversified actors: from ministries to universities and from research centres and special agencies to private consulting companies. This reflects the different national traditions, working methodologies, research landscapes and funding schemes.

The unifying elements of the different systems are their capability of ensuring both competence in the different thematic and horizontal priorities of the Framework Programme, as well as coherence of approach and high level of service and support to their clients (researchers from the public and private sectors).

Interaction between the NCP systems by trans-national activities (networking, benchmarking, partner search, staff exchange schemes etc.) is an important element in harmonizing the quality of service, and at the same time contributing to the realization of the European Research Area.

Specific trans-national activities for NCP performance quality assessment and the development of international best practice receive financial support from the European Commission.

The problematic work environment of Third Countries' NIPs/ NCPs

The NCP systems in Member and Associated Countries which were built and perfected over the years, are only now starting to be created in the Third Countries, and in addition to the problems faced before, they are encountering unique ones, such as high travel expenses caused by physical location (far from Europe), lack of access to the Commission's data etc. This issue will be discussed further on page 19.

Objectives

In this document we attempt to examine and analyze the variety of problems encountered by the Third Countries', mainly ICPCs, NCP community that are unique to them. We will also describe the problems faced by the NCPs of EU Member and Associated states. We will try to introduce solutions and strategies that will help NIPs/ NCPs from Third Countries and in particular from ICPC's to do their work more efficiently and result in increased participation rate of these countries in the EU FP7 and FP8.

¹ "Guiding principles for setting up systems of National Contact Points for FP7", European Commission DG RTD A1, 12/12/2007: <ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/fp7-ncp-guiding-principles.pdf>

NET4SOCIETY Project

NET4SOCIETY is the international network of National Contact Points for Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in the 7th European Framework Programme (FP7), funded by the European Commission.

We include 47 SSH NCPs from European and non-European countries - weaving a net from Iceland to South Africa and Mexico to Russia.

NET4SOCIETY actively supports networking in the SSH research community and offers improved [partner search](#) facilities and [matchmaking events](#) for connecting potential project partners in the SSH calls. An analysis of topics in all of the FP7 work [programmes](#) helps to identify [funding opportunities over and beyond Theme 8](#) "Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities".

For the SSH NCPs, NET4SOCIETY offers, in the benefit of all the NCPs and NIPs, dedicated networking workshops, specific high quality trainings, and mentoring to the SSH NCPs. The NET4SOCIETY website provides a library of [EC documents of key SSH relevance](#) and [other documents of key interest](#), a [best practice handbook](#) and a database for the specific area of "Socio-economics and Humanities" (research directory), including a [refined partner-search tool](#).

World-wide International Cooperation in FPs ²

International cooperation in former Framework Programmes

Up until FP5, [international research collaboration with developing countries](#) was made possible through the INCO programme. Under this programme, research questions that were deemed to be of particular relevance to developing countries were addressed through projects that involved legal entities from EU as well as from developing countries. Legal entities from developing countries participated mainly in INCO projects compared to other projects funded under the “mainstream” FP programmes, because their research activities under INCO were financially supported by the EU. Legal entities from developing (and Third) countries were allowed to participate in projects from FP themes; unfortunately they had to cover all their research costs by themselves. For researchers and institutions from developing countries, this wasn't financially viable.

In FP6, international cooperation was “mainstreamed” in the regular FP research programmes. Legal entities from Third Countries were allowed to participate in FP Thematic Priorities projects, provided that minimum eligibility requirements for the composition of consortia had been met. Still, for the first time, legal entities from certain targeted countries could access FP funding, even though their countries did not contribute to the FP research funds in the first place. A special group of such targeted countries are the International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPCs).

International Cooperation in FP7

The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for research and technological development is the key instrument of the European Commission to further develop the European Research Area (ERA). It is focused on reaching the Lisbon targets, thus strengthening Europe's competitiveness and economic growth by investing in research and science. In order to become the ‘most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy by 2010’, FP7 has renewed the emphasis on international cooperation, beyond the European continent, in Science and Technology. A strong and coherent international research and technology policy is necessary and increasingly seen as a major factor in the EU's policies.

International research collaboration was integrated throughout the Framework Programme by including both geographical and thematic dimensions. In order to deepen the cooperation and maximize its impact, international activities take place throughout FP7 in a complementary and synergistic manner.

² " INCO-NET projects" brochure: http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/978-92-79-08080-7_en.pdf

FP7 - Objectives for international policy

- Supporting European competitiveness through strategic partnerships with Third Countries
- Facilitating contacts with partners in Third Countries
- Addressing specific problems that Third Countries face or which have a global character

International cooperation is particularly targeted at the following three groups of Third Countries

- Emerging economies
- Developing countries
- Developed countries (e.g. the USA, Canada, Japan, etc.)

Steps were taken to enhance the participation in FP7. In the Commission Staff Working Document '[Simplification in the 7th Framework Programme](#)' the authors develop a set of concrete measures for the facilitation of the processes. An important measure concerning international cooperation is a clearer and more user-friendly style of information material for better accessibility to non-specialists and first-time applicants. Further Information: <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/>

FP7 Structure – Aspects of international cooperation

- The [Cooperation](#) Programme enables and sometimes even encourages research cooperation between European researchers and different Third Countries, especially with ICPCs in different ways. Under the Cooperation programme, there are often a few INCO-NET opportunities that are mostly Coordination and Support Actions aimed to help build awareness and research networks around FP7-related research areas.
- The [Capacities](#) Programme supports a range of activities to support Science and Technology (S&T) cooperation policies and strengthen research capacity in the European scientific community and other regions of the world. This programme too allows and sometimes even encourages international research collaboration involving Third Countries, although some opportunities are specifically limited to institutions based in Member States and Associated Countries.
- The [People](#) Programme meets the need to foster international mobility of both incoming and outgoing researchers. It allows and often encourages international collaboration involving Third Countries.
- The [Ideas](#) Programme supports excellence in frontier research and enables individual top international researchers to participate in European led teams. The emphasis here is on the latter.

The international dimension is now inherent in all European Community research activities and is implemented in two ways:

- General opening up of the activities to researchers and research organisations from all Third Countries. This general opening includes the possibility of dedicated actions for Third Countries (mainly industrialised and emerging economies).
- Opening up of the thematic activities through Specific International Cooperation Actions (SICAs) dedicated to Third Countries which are listed as International

Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPCs). SICAs aim at reinforcing the research capacity in non-associated candidate countries and neighbourhood countries and at addressing the needs of developing and emerging economies by means of dedicated cooperative research in given thematic areas. Specific participation criteria apply to 'Collaborative Projects' for SICA topics (participation of a minimum of two Member States or Associated Countries plus two targeted countries). Further information on these criteria is given in the work programmes and in the 'Guide for Applicants'. For example:

- Health: pandemics, global health issues, AIDS, etc.
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Energy: measures to reach the millennium development goals, environmental consequences of energy policies, etc.
- Environment: climate change, biodiversity, desertification, etc.
- In the Work Programme for the Theme '**Socio-economic sciences and Humanities**' there are some topics which generally call for participation of international partners and will profit from participating institutions from Third Countries. SICAs dedicated to specific areas vary in each work programme.

In general, the 'Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities' Theme favours the participation of researchers and research institutions from Third Countries in proposals that are submitted under all Topics open under each Call. A number of topics represent areas of significant potential mutual benefit and have been identified as particularly suitable for International Cooperation.

Participation is open to international organisations and legal entities established in Third Countries after the minimum conditions laid down in the 'Rules for participation' have been met, as well as any conditions specified in the specific programmes or relevant work programmes.

Partners from countries associated to FP7 (through international agreements that require a financial contribution to FP7's budget) can participate on similar terms (minimum conditions and funding) as participants from the EU Member States. Organisations and researchers from an International Cooperation Partner Country (ICPC) may also be funded.

International organisations and partners from non-ICPC countries other than the Associated Countries may be granted EU funding provided that at least one of the following conditions is met:

- 1) provision is made to that effect in the specific programmes or in the relevant work programme
- 2) the contribution is essential for carrying out the research project
- 3) such contribution is provided for in a bilateral scientific and technological agreement or any other arrangement between the EU and the country in which the legal entity is established.

When it comes to actual participation in research projects (Collaborative projects), legal entities from Third Countries are allowed to participate in, or coordinate proposals submitted under all topics. Here, participation of researchers and research institutes from ICPCs is particularly **encouraged**.

Some topics under an open call may be highlighted as being "research areas which are particularly well suited for international cooperation". Such a remark in the topic description should be taken seriously by proposal developers, because this will be taken into consideration when proposals are evaluated. Here, the active participation of a relevant Third Country partner or partners will add to the scientific excellence of the project and will lead to an increased impact of the research.

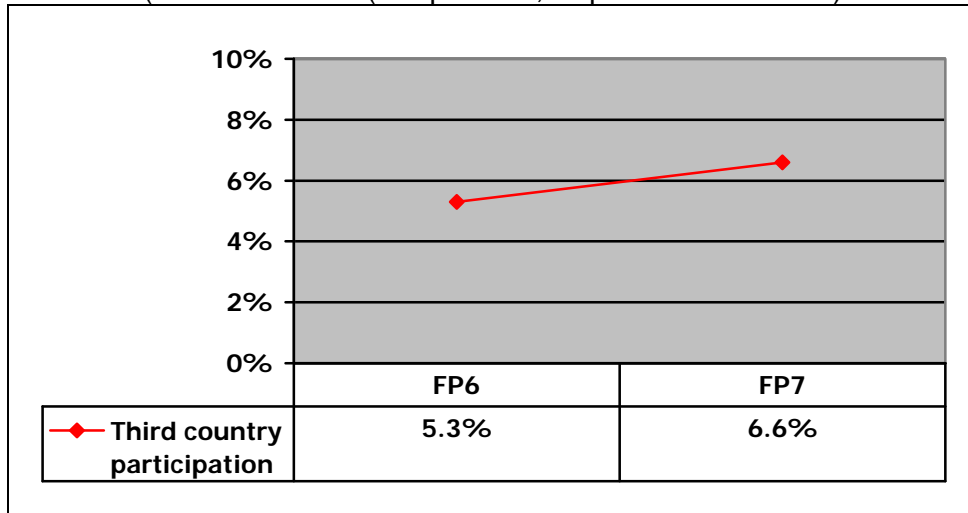
Other topics under an open call may be earmarked for Specific International Cooperation.

For the funding scheme 'Collaborative project for specific cooperation actions dedicated to international cooperation', minimum eligibility conditions will require the inclusion of international cooperation partner countries. This means that a proposal that does not involve ICPC-based legal entities will be disqualified before evaluation.

Statistics

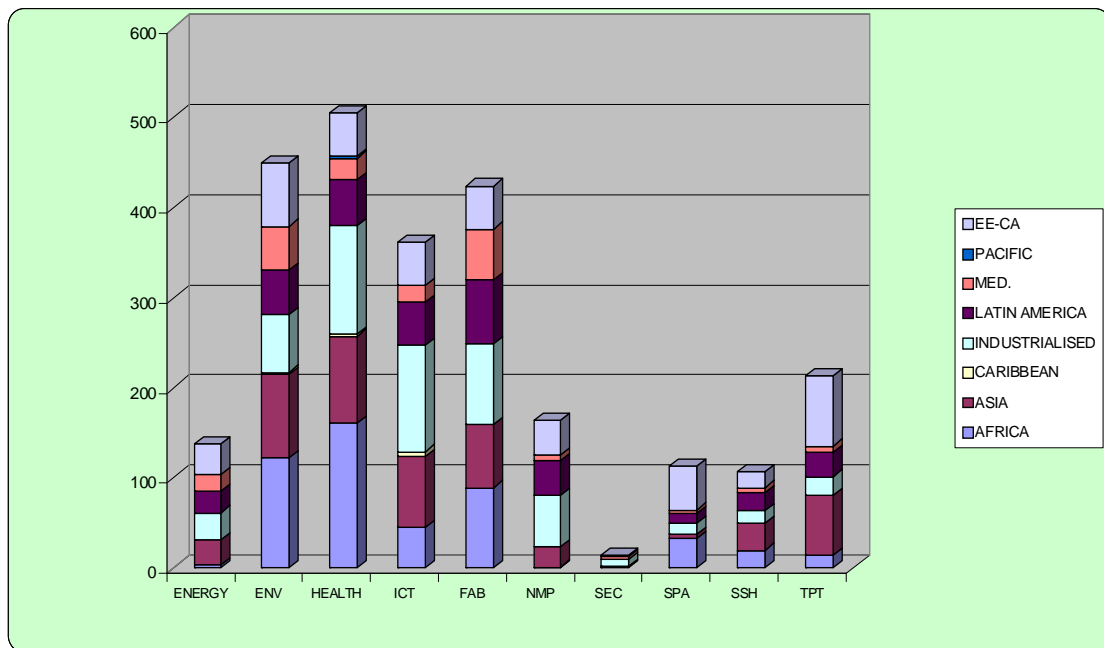
The Third Countries participation percentage in the FP7 compared to FP6 has increased by 1.3% (5.3% in FP6 and 6.6% in FP7)³.

Chart 1: Share of Third Countries participation (FP6 Total / FP7 (Cooperation, Capacities + Euratom))



Third Countries' participation pattern in FP7-Cooperation is mostly in the Health theme, Environment, KBBE and ICT, while SSH is only in the 9th place, after Space (see Chart 2).

Chart 2: Number of main listed applications per thematic areas and "regions" (Cooperation)



³ Data taken from "Four years of FP7 - Figures, trends and lessons" presentation by Alessandro Damiani, 25 November 2010

The Third Countries NIP/NCP systems:

Under the former and current European Framework Programmes, many Third Countries have set up [NIP/NCP systems](#). The goals of these systems or networks are to promote, organise and contribute to the participation of Third Countries in the activities of FP7. These goals are expected to be achieved by:

- Identifying and prioritising common research areas of mutual interest and benefit. Facilitating the uptake and use of common identified research areas and the monitoring of performance and impact of international S&T cooperation across the Specific Programmes of FP7.
- Bringing together relevant policy makers, scientific community, civil society organisations and private sector stakeholders of the EU and of Third Countries to identify S&T priorities and define cooperation policy orientations.
- Implementing specific activities dedicated to enhancing participation of the targeted countries or regions in the Framework Programme, including support given to NIPs/ NCPs in the Third Countries.

The difficulties of the NIPs/ NCPs:

As is the case with all countries establishing NCP systems, different Third Countries take different approaches to promote the Seventh Framework Programme to their community. Therefore, the NIPs/ NCPs face specific challenges and sometimes difficulties that require special guidance and support:

NIPs'/ NCPs' position and conditions

The architectures of NIP/ NCP systems in Third Countries

The NIP/ NCP systems in Third Countries show a wide variety of architectures (see Annex B):

- From several NIPs/ NCP and representatives each dealing with different aspects of FP7 to a single NIP/ NCP who coordinates all the national activities under FP7.
- The job of the NIPs/ NCP varies from full time to part time and in many cases it is done in addition to a regular job, on a voluntary basis.
- Budgets available for travel & other action appear to be very limited.
- Some Third Countries established liaison offices in Brussels for enabling better connections with the Commission, while others are away from the source of information.

As a result, consultation and assistance from experienced colleagues on a national basis is hardly feasible. This may result in NIPs/ NCPs with limited comprehension of the scope of their role which may hamper their possibilities to fulfil their duty.

Information flow from and to the Commission

As in all countries, NIPs and NCPs in the Third Countries are nominated by their respective national ministry. Unfortunately they are mostly not necessarily equipped

with an adequate budget. When they are invited to participate in trans-national NCP activities such as NCP meetings or info-days in Brussels, they are not eligible to the EU reimbursement mechanism but depend on budgetary decisions in their home country alone. This leads to limited participation in formal meetings, and consequently makes them feel 'outside the loop'. This then leads to less informed NCPs, less possibility of input into strategic processes and less inclusion in proposal participation. NIPs/ NCPs in Third Countries sometimes are researchers themselves (want to be involved in research projects, and as a result may have no time for NCP work), or do not have the contact to their clients. Under these circumstances, limited input from the relevant research community in their countries is given to the European Commission. At the same time, information from the European Commission may not reach researchers who could take part in FP proposals.

Additional challenges for NCPs in convincing their “Clients”

Geographical remoteness

Physical distance and/ or time differences make it difficult for NIPs/ NCPs and potential partners to communicate and collaborate freely when proposal ideas are developed, documents are collated, or proposals finalised.

Limited Research Funding ⁴

The national budgets of ICPCs are often targeted at development challenges, with research being regarded as somewhat of a luxury. Therefore, researchers and research institutions find participation in FP7-funded projects attractive. However, the requirement to supplement the European Commission contribution is often a discouragement to participate.

A quantity analysis of participation from Third Countries

The table below provides an overview of Third Countries involvement in funded projects under “Citizens and Governance” and “Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities” to date.*

Third Country (excluding the FP6 Associated Countries)	FP6 Citizens and Governance	FP7 SSH so far
Albania (AC in FP7)	1	1
Algeria	2	0
Argentina	1	3
Azerbaijan	0	2
Bangladesh	0	1
Belarus	1	2
Bolivia	1	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	0
Brazil	1	4
Cameroon	0	1
Canada	2	5
China	2	10
Colombia	2	0
Congo	0	1
Croatia	11	3
Egypt	3	2
Ethiopia	0	2
Faroe Islands (AC in FP7 as of May 2010)	0	1
Georgia	3	0

⁴ http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/public_en.html

Third Country (excluding the FP6 Associated Countries)	FP6 Citizens and Governance	FP7 SSH so far
Ghana	0	1
Haiti	0	1
Hong Kong	1	2
India	4	8
Indonesia	1	0
Japan	0	0
Jordan	1	1
Kenya	0	1
Korea	1	0
Kyrgyzstan	3	0
Lebanon	1	0
Macao	1	0
FYROM (AC in FP7)	1	1
Malaysia	1	0
Mexico	0	3
Moldova	2	0
Morocco	6	3
Mozambique	2	0
New Zealand	2	0
Pakistan	0	1
Peru	0	1
Palestinian administered areas	0	2
Russian Federation	12	4
Senegal	1	3
Serbia and Montenegro** (AC in FP7)	6	2, 1
Somalia	0	1
South Africa	3	6
Swaziland	1	0
Taiwan	1	0
Thailand	1	0
Tunisia	4	1
Uganda	1	1
Ukraine	5	6
United States	8	4
Uruguay	1	1
Uzbekistan	1	0
Total Projects	104	93
Total Participating Third Countries	39	37

* The table is a result of analyzed data which was provided by DG research in June 2009 and also includes results of the SSH 2010 calls.

** In FP6, the information about Serbia and Montenegro was gathered for one united country. In FP7, the information of the two countries is separated, but for the comparison with FP6, the two countries are in the same row, but different colors.

The numbers here are rather small which surely affect the conclusions which could be drawn. Nevertheless, an improvement in the quantity and quality of the participation and management from the Third Countries, and specifically from the ICPCs can be expected for the future thanks to the training activities of the NCPs and NIPs in these countries by the NCPs projects, such as NET4SOCIETY.

In the 2010 call, the new funding scheme 'Societal Challenge' was found to be attractive to the researchers from Third Countries. In such challenges a large consortium is organized, where there is enough room for researchers from Third Countries to participate in SSH.

Increased efforts to support the flow of information from and into the Third Countries is necessary to increase participation of Third Country researchers in SSH in FP7. Such efforts were taken by NET4SOCIETY, as mentioned above and further described below. Further activities will be taken in the follow-up project NET4SOCIETY2.

Means of assistance

*The INCO-NET projects*⁵

There are six INCO-NET projects. These projects cover different regions of the world, i.e. Western Balkan Countries, Mediterranean Partner Countries, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, South East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

INCO-NET projects aim to establish coordination platforms, which:

- Assist the scientific communities by bringing together relevant stakeholders from the EU and Third Countries such as: policy makers, researchers, the private sector and others, that belong to the targeted region, in order to identify S&T priorities and support the definition of S&T cooperation orientations;
- Support NIPs/ NCPs in Third Countries in implementing awareness and dissemination activities dedicated to strengthening the participation of targeted countries/regions in the Framework Programme;
- Carry out strategic analysis of S&T trends and map research capacities in the targeted region, including their links with corresponding EU research counterparts;
- Systematically monitor and review cooperation activities in order to provide feedback and updating of S&T policies and priorities.

These projects – which are of four years duration – involve research administrations, the research community, industry and other stakeholders from Member States, Associated Countries and Third Countries. All are expected to provide the European Commission Directorate “International Cooperation” and the other Research Directorates with the necessary inputs and evidence to support future S&T cooperation policies, including the preparation of future FP7 Work Programmes.

The INCO-NETs are:

WBC-INCO.NET is a coordination of research policies with the Western Balkan Countries (WBC). It is designed to become a major strategic project in order to support cooperation in the field of S&T between the EU, the countries associated to FP7 and WBCs.

<http://wbc-inco.net/about/mission.html>

IncoNet EECA is an S&T International Cooperation Network for Eastern European and Central Asian Countries (EECA). The principal objective of EU cooperation in this region is to develop an increasingly close relationship, going beyond past levels of cooperation to gradual economic integration and deepening political cooperation.

www.inco-eeca.net

MIRA project aims to develop and support the dialogue “EUMPCs” by bringing together policymakers and stakeholders of the Mediterranean Partners Countries (MPCs) and EU Member States. This dialogue will go hand in hand with the political dialogue created by the Barcelona Process of Euro-Mediterranean dialogue through the Monitoring Committee for the Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in RTD, also named the Barcelona RTD Monitoring Committee (MoCo).

www.miraproject.eu

CAAST-Net is a Network for the Coordination and Advancement of Sub-Saharan Africa-EU Science & Technology Cooperation. CAAST-Net’s goal is to promote and

⁵ " INCO-NET projects" brochure: http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/978-92-79-08080-7_en.pdf

facilitate an increase in the quality and quantity of EU-Africa cooperation in S&T, primarily, although not exclusively, focusing on greater use of the EU's Seventh Framework Programme, and aiming for greater synergy between R&D and development cooperation instruments, such as the European Development Fund (EDF).

www.caast-net.org

SEA-EU-NET is facilitating the bi-regional EU-ASEAN Science and Technology Dialogue. The SEA-EU-NET project aims at increasing the quality, quantity, profile and impact of bi-regional S&T cooperation between the 10 member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Member States and Associated Countries of the EU.

www.sea-eu.net

EULARINET aims at Coordinating Latin America Research and Innovation NETWORKS. EULARINET's goal is to strengthen bi-regional dialogue on S&T between EU Member States, Associated States and Latin American Partner Countries (LAPC) at policy, programme and institutional (research and industry entities) levels.

www.S2lat.eu/eularinet

Via the INCO-NET projects closer connections with research communities in Third Countries were established; representatives from some INCO-NETs attended NET4SOCIETY workshops.

Third Countries' NIPs/ NCPs participating in NCPs projects

In different NCP projects, such as NET4SOCIETY, several NIPs/ NCPs take an active part. By attending the workshops, trainings, twinning and mentoring activities they are better exposed to the NCP working patterns, and they better understand the work programme and rules of participation.

In the NET4SOCIETY project, a specific task was designed for meeting the needs of SSH NIPs/ NCPs from all over the world. As these needs were vague at the beginning of the project, the initial approach was sending newsletters to interested parties, which were identified through various channels: CORDIS, the European Commission, personal contacts with NIPs/ NCPs and/or research organisation in Third Countries, etc. By raising awareness and advertising NET4SOCIETY activities among the NIPs/ NCPs in those Third Countries, the door was open for requests, mainly for information about FP7, and more specifically in SSH and related issues. At the same time, the MS and AC NCPs got a chance to learn more of the difficulties and obstacles NIPs/ NCPs and research communities from Third Countries face during workshops in Riga and Dublin, which were organized with representatives of a few INCO-NET projects. The SEA-EU-NET project organized training for NIPs/ NCPs from South East Asia and a representative from NET4SOCIETY presented the SSH 2010 Work Programme.

Conclusions

Ideas for further strengthening the NIPs/ NCPs

To become more competitive and play a leading role globally, the European Union needs a strong and coherent international science and technology (S&T) policy with three objectives:⁶

- Supporting European competitiveness through strategic partnerships with Third Countries in selected fields of science, and engaging the best Third Country scientists to work in and with Europe.
- Enhancing the production of knowledge and scientific excellence by enabling European universities, research institutions and firms to establish contact with their partners in Third Countries, thereby facilitating access to research environments outside Europe and promoting synergies on a global scale.
- Addressing specific problems that Third Countries face or those that have a global character, on the basis of mutual interest and mutual benefit.

It is advisable to enable participation of NIPs/ NCPs from Third Countries and to encourage them to be more involved in information activities in Brussels.

In order to achieve better communication and information and to further the inclusion of Third Country researchers, the multipliers need to be targeted. This is done by NET4SOCIETY. The activities in the NET4SOCIETY project do not require complex infrastructure. Rather, the NCPs must be better connected. NET4SOCIETY has put a lot of thought, effort and work in creating an active network and establishing a professional task force for the benefit of the NIPs/ NCPs from Third Countries.

NET4SOCIETY provides an opportunity for NCPs from Third Countries to collaborate directly with their counterparts from EU countries and associated states. This helps them to “level the playing fields.” INCO activities are valuable in their own right, but there is a danger of still “widening the gap” between EU and non-EU beneficiaries.

NET4SOCIETY is still putting a lot of effort in identifying NIPs/ NCPs from Third Countries or groups of Third Countries and has established contacts beyond those officially nominated contacts in Annex B (Brazil, Taiwan, Ukraine, Moldavia) – to share information on opportunities under FP7, as well as in SSH-related activities in general. Through the work of NET4SOCIETY it was observed that establishing relations with NIPs/ NCPs from Third Countries which are not partners to the project is rather difficult. National requirement, long and expensive flights which have to be paid prior to the reimbursement from the project and many other problems have made it very difficult for many NIPs/ NCPs to be an active part of the N4S project. Emails were found to be the best means of communication so far. This form of communication is expected to improve and become fully reciprocal in the future, once we overcome the obstacles we encounter.

EU embassies with research attaches in Third Countries could play a role in raising information – e.g. disseminating newsletters to universities and other research institutions in the country they are serving. At the same time, the Foreign Services of the Third Countries in EU Member States and Associated Countries must be instructed by their governments to assist in promoting the research potential of their countries.

⁶ http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/public_en.html

It is hoped that the “research directory” developed under NET4SOCIETY, as well as the partner search facility will help filling the gap in places where there are no NIPs/ NCPs, or when the NIPs/ NCPs are not working on a full-time basis.

In addition to the above, more challenges remaining include: quality control of partner searches and submissions from Third / ICPC countries, and language issues. In many countries, English is not the first neither the second official languages. As a result, there are NIPs/ NCPs and researchers who face the barrier of language, with somewhat limited ability to communicate with colleagues from Europe.

Forecast

In this paper we have explored the current situation of NIPs/ NCPs and Information multipliers in Third Countries, especially ICPCs, regarding their researchers' participation in FP projects and identified areas in need of further action.

The process of "weaving" the network has raised a lot of challenges. Throughout our work we learnt and gained a lot of knowledge on what and how to achieve our goals. We sometimes need to adapt to different realities and situations in different places, and try to employ the most adequate approach each time. As we suggested above, there is still a lot of work to be done and we are fully committed to it. This activity will continue in the follow-up project NET4SOCIETY2, where the achievements in NET4SOCIETY will be used to continue with this important task.

Task 3.4: “A strong Network with 3rd countries NCPs and Multipliers” was designed specifically to “elaborate and strengthen a close network with NCPs, information multipliers and researchers from 3rd countries”. We are confident that “this closer cooperation will benefit both sides”.

In order to reach our goal, a few activities are planned:

- Dedicated webpage will be designed and online helpdesk will operate in order to provide information on SSH research opportunities for researchers from Third Countries.
- Profiles from Third Countries will be collected and uploaded to the Research Directory
- Close connection with NIPs/ NCPs, Information multipliers and researchers from Third Countries will be kept by assigned members of the group, in-charge of different regions: Mediterranean countries, Black Sea region, Asia, CIS, North and Latin America, and Africa. On top of these, close connection will be kept with INCO-NET projects, another source of information multipliers.
- E-newsletter will be published with success stories from SSH projects in Third Countries.
- Analysis of ICPC participation in SSH research projects and in comparison to other themes in FP7 so far will be carried out.
- A session of a workshop will be organized to discuss Third Countries' participation (analysis results and future oriented activities) with Third Countries' NCPs and multipliers

Annex A

Annex 1: List of International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC)¹

ACP*^{*}

- AFRICAN

• Angola	LM
• Benin	L
• Botswana	UM
• Burkina-Faso	L
• Burundi	L
• Cameroon	LM
• Cape Verde	LM
• Central African Republic	L
• Chad	L
• Comoros	L
• Congo (Republic)	LM
• Congo (Democratic Rep.)	L
• Côte d'Ivoire	L
• Djibouti	LM
• Equatorial Guinea	UM
• Eritrea	L
• Ethiopia	L
• Gabon	UM
• Gambia	L
• Ghana	L
• Guinea	L
• Guinea-Bissau	L
• Kenya	L
• Lesotho	LM
• Liberia	L
• Madagascar	L
• Malawi	L
• Mali	L
• Mauritania	L
• Mauritius	UM
• Mozambique	L
• Namibia	LM
• Niger	L
• Nigeria	L
• Rwanda	L
• Sao Tome and Principe	L
• Senegal	L
• Seychelles	UM
• Sierra Leone	L
• Somalia	L
• South Africa ²	UM
• Sudan	L
• Swaziland	LM
• Tanzania	L
• Togo	L

• Uganda	L
• Zambia	L
• Zimbabwe	L

- CARIBBEAN

• Barbados	UM
• Belize	UM
• Cuba	LM
• Dominica	UM
• Dominican Rep.	LM
• Grenada	UM
• Guyana	LM
• Haiti	L
• Jamaica	LM
• Saint Kitts and Nevis	UM
• Saint Lucia	UM
• Saint Vincent and Grenadines	UM
• Suriname	LM
• Trinidad and Tobago	UM

- PACIFIC

• Cook Islands	UM
• Timor Leste	L
• Fiji	LM
• Kiribati	LM
• Marshall Islands	LM
• Micronesia, Federal States of	UM
• Niue	UM
• Palau	UM
• Papua New Guinea	L
• Samoa	LM
• Solomon Islands	L
• Tonga	LM
• Tuvalu	LM
• Vanuatu	LM

ASIA

• Afghanistan	L
• Bangladesh	L
• Bhutan	L
• Burma/Myanmar	L
• Cambodia	L
• China ^{2**}	LM
• Democratic People's Republic of Korea	L
• India ^{2**}	L
• Indonesia	LM
• Iran	LM
• Iraq	LM

• Lao People's Democratic Rep.	L
• Malaysia	UM
• Maldives	LM
• Mongolia	L
• Nepal	L
• Oman	UM
• Pakistan	L
• Philippines	LM
• Sri Lanka	LM
• Thailand	LM
• Vietnam	L
• Yemen	L

EASTERN EUROPE

AND CENTRAL ASIA (EECA)

• Armenia ³	LM
• Azerbaijan ³	LM
• Belarus ²	LM
• Georgia ²	LM
• Kazakhstan	LM
• Kyrgyz Republic	L
• Moldova ^{3,4}	LM
• Russia ^{2**}	UM
• Tajikistan	L
• Turkmenistan	LM
• Ukraine ^{2,3,4}	LM
• Uzbekistan	L

LATIN AMERICA

• Argentina ²	UM
• Bolivia	LM
• Brazil ^{2**}	LM
• Chile ²	UM
• Colombia	LM
• Costa Rica	UM
• Ecuador	LM
• El Salvador	LM
• Guatemala	LM
• Honduras	LM
• Mexico ²	UM
• Nicaragua	LM
• Panama	UM
• Paraguay	LM
• Peru	LM
• Uruguay	UM
• Venezuela	UM

MEDITERRANEAN PARTNER COUNTRIES (MPC)

• Algeria ³	LM
• Egypt ^{2,3}	LM
• Jordan ^{2,3}	LM
• Lebanon ²	UM
• Libya ²	UM

• Morocco ^{2,3}	LM
• Palestinian-administered areas ³	LM
• Syrian Arab Rep. ³	LM
• Tunisia ^{2,3}	LM

WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES (WBC)

• Kosovo ⁵	LM
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*In the 'Specific international cooperation actions', Africa can also be considered as a region on its own, while the Caribbean countries can also participate with Latin American and the Pacific countries with Asia.

**For participation in the 'Specific international cooperation actions' each of Brazil, China, India and Russia may be considered individually as a region on its own. Thus, the required two or more partners can be located in these countries. However, in this case, at least two different partners from different provinces, oblasts, republics or states within Brazil, China, India or Russia are necessary.

In accordance with Article 2(12) of the Rules for Participation in FP7, 'International Cooperation Partner Country' (ICPC) means a third country which the Commission classifies as a low-income (L), lower-middle-income (LM) or upper-middle-income (UM) country. Countries associated to the Seventh EU Framework Programme do not qualify as ICP Countries and therefore do not appear in this list.

* Legal entities established in the high-income territories Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan are not eligible under the ICPC provisions.

¹ Legal entities established in countries in which the European Union under Articles 75 and 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union has issued actions to interrupt or to reduce, in part or completely, economic relations, may only participate and receive a financial contribution if it complies with these actions.

² Signed an agreement with the EU covering Science & Technology.

³ These countries are also part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

⁴ Until the country becomes Associated to FP7
⁵ As defined by UNSC resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999.

Annex B

The Official list of the NIPs/ NCPs in Third CountriesBased on information collected from the CORDIS website: [FP7 contacts in Third Countries](#) (20.11.2010)

Country	No. of NIPs/ NCPs	No. of FP7 programmes covered	Architectures of NIP/ NCP systems	Location of the NIP/ NCP	Specific NIP/ NCP for SSH
ALGERIA	18	17	Separate entities	Most of them are in Algiers, the others are in Oran, Constantine, Tlemcen.	FERFERA, Mohammed Yacine (Prof.)
ARGENTINA	12	12	Separate entities	Most located in Buenos Aires, one in Mendoza Ciudad	LUNA, Florencia (Dr.)
ARMENIA	8	8	Separate entities	All located in Yerevan	-
AUSTRALIA	3	15	Separate entities	The National coordinator NCP is in Brussels while the others are in Canberra	-
AZERBAIJAN	2	3	Separate entities	All located in Baku	-
BELARUS	12	15	Separate entities	All located in Minsk	TITARENKO, Larisa (Prof.)
BOLIVIA	5	3	Separate entities	Located in La Paz, one in Cochabamba	-
BRAZIL	14	12	Separate entities	Located in Brasilia, 2 in Rio de Janeiro	LISBOA THEODORO, Mário (Dr.), VENTURA, Giuliano (Mr.)

Country	No. of NIPs/ NCPs	No. of FP7 programmes covered	Architectures of NIP/ NCP systems	Location of the NIP/ NCP	Specific NIP/ NCP for SSH
CAMBODIA	1	National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Phnom Penh	-
CANADA	7	5	Separate entities	The National coordinator NCP and Health NCP is in Brussels while the others are in Ottawa	-
CAPE VERDE	1	National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Santiago	-
CHILE	12	14	Separate entities	Located in Santiago, La Serena, Valparaíso	MASCAREÑO, Aldo (Dr.)
CHINA	1	National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Beijing	-
COLOMBIA	2	2	One organisation	Located in Bogota	-
COSTA RICA	1	2	One organisation	Located in San José	-
CUBA	1	National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Habana	-
ECUADOR	4	2	One organisation	Located in Quito	-
EGYPT	9	10	Separate entities	Most of them are in Cairo-Giza, one in Alexandria	ABDELWAHAB, Hala (Mrs)
ETHIOPIA	1	2	One organisation	Located in Addis Abeba	-
GEORGIA	7	8	Separate entities	All located in Tbilisi	-

Country	No. of NIPs/ NCPs	No. of FP7 programmes covered	Architectures of NIP/ NCP systems	Location of the NIP/ NCP	Specific NIP/ NCP for SSH
GUATEMALA	1	National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Ciudad de Guatemala	-
HONDURAS	1	National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Tegucigalpa	-
INDIA	2	1	One organisation	Located in New Delhi	-
INDONESIA	4	4	Separate entities	Most located in Jakarta, one in West Java	-
JAMAICA	7	8	Separate entities	The National coordinator NCP is in Brussels while the others are in different organizations in Kingston	-
JORDAN	1	2	One organisation	Located in Amman	-
KAZAKHSTAN	11	13	Separate entities	Located in Astana, Almay, Kurchatov.	BOPIEVA, Zhamilya Kadyrovna (Ms.)
KENYA	1	1	One organisation	Located in Nairobi	-
KOREA	23	12	Separate entities	The National coordinator NCP is in Brussels while the others are in Saarbrucken, Seoul and Daejeon	KIM, Ki-Hyoung (Mr.), PARK, Dae-Hyeon (Mr.)
KOSOVO	1	National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Prishtine	-

Country	No. of NIPs/ NCPs	No. of FP7 programmes covered	Architectures of NIP/ NCP systems	Location of the NIP/ NCP	Specific NIP/ NCP for SSH
KYRGYZSTAN	1	National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Bishkek	-
LEBANON	1	2	One organisation	Located in Beirut	-
MALAYSIA	6	5	Separate entities	Most located in Putrajaya, one in Kuala Lumpur	-
MEXICO	20	11	Separate entities	Most of them are in Mexico D.F., the others are in a few places: Irapuato, Zapopan Jalisco, Zacatenco, Atizapán de Zaragoza, Morelos, San Luis Potosí, and one in Brussels	TORRES SALCIDO, Gerardo (Dr.), TORRES PASCACIO, Rita (Ms.), VILCHIS RAMIREZ, Leopoldo (Dr.)
MOLDOVA	11	12	Separate entities	Located in Chisinau	STAH, Diana (Ms.)
MOROCCO	10	7	Separate entities	Located in Rabat, Tétouan, Mohammedia, Fès V.N., Settat	-
MYANMAR	1	National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Naypyidaw	-
NEW ZEALAND	3	18	Separate entities	One National coordinator NCP is in New Zealand while the others are in Brussels	FALLOON, Karla (Ms.), GLYNN, Carole (Mrs.)
NICARAGUA	2	2	One organisation	Located in Managua	-
OMAN	2	2	One organisation	Located in Athaiba	-
Palestine	1	2	One organisation	Located in Ramallah	-

Country	No. of NIPs/ NCPs	No. of FP7 programmes covered	Architectures of NIP/ NCP systems	Location of the NIP/ NCP	Specific NIP/ NCP for SSH
PARAGUAY	2	2 National Coordinator NCP	One organisation	Located in Asuncion	-
PERU	1	1	One organisation	Located in Lima	-
PHILIPPINES	4	3	Separate entities	Most located in Taguig, one in Quezon	-
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	24	14	Separate entities	Most in Moscow, two in St. Petersburg, one in Obninsk	CHUSOVA, Natalia (Ms.), GUROVA, Anastasia (Ms.)
SOUTH AFRICA	17	15	Separate entities	One is in Brussels, all the others in South Africa – of which most are in Pretoria and a few in other places (Braamfontein, Cape Town, Sandton)	VAN ZYL, Christa (Dr.)
TAIWAN	12	7	Separate entities	Most located in Taipei, one in Kaohsiung	LIAO, Da-chi (Prof.), SHEN, Tung (Prof.)
Thailand	12	13	The NIPs/ NCPs work in one organisation in Thailand and in the Thai Embassy in Brussels	One is in Brussels, the others in Pathumthani, two in Bangkok, one in Nonthaburi	MEKA-APIRUK, Junpen (Dr.), TINGSABADH, Charit (Prof.)
TUNISIA	9	10	Separate entities	Most located in Tunis, also in Soliman, Gabès, El Ghazala.	TLILI, Rachida (Ms.)
UGANDA	10	11	One organisation	Located in Kampala	TUJUNIRWE, Edward (Mr.)

Country	No. of NIPs/ NCPs	No. of FP7 programmes covered	Architectures of NIP/ NCP systems	Location of the NIP/ NCP	Specific NIP/ NCP for SSH
UKRAINE	2	2	One organisation	Located in Kyiv and Brussels	-
URUGUAY	11	11	Separate entities	Located in Montevideo	CASTRO, Ana (Dr.)
UZBEKISTAN	2	2	One organisation	Located in Tashkent	-
VENEZUELA	2	1	One organisation	Located in Caracas	-