



S&T International Cooperation Network for Eastern European and Central Asian Countries

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Abstract	This report refers to the kick-off event on SICAs that took place in the framework of the INCONET Coordinators meeting. The paper presents the exchanged views of the participants and conclusions reached, as well as specific remarks on the role that Thematic Workshops on identifying topics for future SICAs could play within the different Thematic Priorities.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Not necessary for the purposes of this deliverable

1 INTRODUCTION

One of the main goals of the IncoNet EECA project is to strengthen the participation of the Eastern European and Central Asian (EECA) countries in the 7th Framework Programme. To achieve this goal, the project includes several activities such as brokerage events, information days, support to the local National Contact Point structures, etc. that will create awareness and eventually a dynamic for a better utilisation of the opportunities available for third countries in FP7.

In addition and in parallel to the aforementioned activities, the IncoNet EECA project also addresses the issue of Specific International Cooperation Activities (SICAs). These activities consist of calls for proposals on specific topics in the Work Programmes of the different Themes addressed to research consortia in which the participation of teams from third countries (International Cooperation Partner Countries – ICPCs) is mandatory, i.e. it constitutes an eligibility criterion.

Even though it is known that the number of SICAs in the different Themes will always be limited since the main tool for international cooperation in FP7 is by far the opening of all parts of the Work Programmes to participation from third countries on a voluntary/spontaneous basis, the importance of the SICAs cannot be neglected since they constitute the only type of projects requesting the participation of third countries. In this context, since the IncoNet EECA (and every INCONET type project) is by definition a project set up jointly with the target region and aiming at policy dialogue and definition of research priorities with the region, it has been considered necessary to include Thematic Workshops among the actions to be implemented by the project dedicated to the identification of suitable topics that could be considered by the different Themes for possible future SICAs.

However, since the inclusion of SICAs in the Work Programmes of the various Themes is the sole responsibility of the relevant EC Thematic Directorate (and its stakeholders, e.g. the Programme Committee), it was clear from the beginning that the IncoNet EECA project could only act as a facilitator in that process and therefore the activity envisaged concerning the SICAs would have to be implemented jointly with the various Themes. It was therefore proposed in the project to organize a ‘kick-off’ event for the activity concerning the SICAs, addressed to representatives of the various Thematic Directorates in order to inform them from the very beginning about the proposed approach.

Meanwhile, the INCO Programme decided to organize in Brussels a meeting of the six INCONET Coordinators in order to present to them the International Cooperation component of FP7 and to exchange views on its implementation. A specific session of this meeting was dedicated to the presentation of the INCONET projects to representatives in charge of International Cooperation from the various Thematic Directorates. This session was the ideal opportunity for the introduction of the activities foreseen in IncoNet EECA aiming at the identification of suitable topics that could be proposed as SICAs. The advantages of this ‘merging’ of the planned ‘kick-off’ event with the meeting organized by the INCO Programme were two-fold: on the one hand the target group was already there (i.e. representatives of the Thematic Directorates) and therefore there was no need to re-invite them after a few days. On the other hand, the other INCONET coordinators were also present and could take advantage of the discussion since in some other INCONETs, activities ‘towards SICAs’ were also foreseen but not always in the same way and, moreover, without taking into account the need to involve from the beginning the Thematic Directorates.

2 IMPLEMENTATION

Following the aforementioned reasoning, it was proposed to the project's Scientific Officer and to the INCO Programme to insert in the agenda of the meeting of the INCONET Coordinators and in particular in the Session where representatives of the Thematic Directorates would be present, a dedicated presentation and discussion of the activities aiming at the identification of suitable topics to be proposed as SICAs, instead of a separate 'kick-off' event for SICAs. This proposal was accepted and therefore the 'kick-off' event for SICAs was merged with the meeting of INCONET coordinators and constituted a separate Agenda item, including:

- A brief presentation on the topic by the IncoNet EECA coordinator in order to introduce and stimulate the discussion (Annex I);
- A discussion among the representatives of the Thematic Directorates, the INCONET coordinators and the staff of the INCO Programme, using as a basis for the discussion the document '*Support for the identification of suitable International Cooperation Activities in various FP7 Themes*' prepared by the IncoNet EECA coordinator (Annex II);
- Further discussion and decisions on next steps, during the wrap-up session among the INCONET coordinators.

3 MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE COORDINATORS MEETING

The main conclusions that came out from this activity could be summarized as follows:

1. The different Thematic Priorities were not ready to join the activities planned or proposed by the INCONETs. Their representatives took note of the presentation and of the discussion but only few of them expressed a preliminary agreement, which in any case needed further consideration. In this respect, the event was extremely important since it initiated the dialogue with the Thematic Directorates and, moreover, it avoided the risk to implement activities (i.e. Thematic Workshops) the results of which could be ignored by the relevant Directorates.
2. There was no clear perception of the difference and/or the limit between priority-setting through policy dialogue at various policy fora, versus the identification of suitable topics of mutual interest to be proposed as potential SICAs. In this context, the need and difference of the Thematic Workshops was not evident, when compared to the meetings and conclusions of the policy dialogue platforms.
3. The time schedule for the (annual for most Themes) revisions of the Work Programmes was different than initially foreseen: the revisions were taking place in Spring – early Summer every year and therefore it was already too late for the implementation of Thematic Workshops that would provide input for this year's revisions. Instead, any foreseen activity should be implemented by November 08 in order to be considered in next year's revisions.

The aforementioned points are also reflected in the Minutes of the meeting of the INCONET coordinators (Annex III).

4 DECISIONS

Since the issue of identification of topics to be proposed as SICAs is of interest to several INCONET projects, it was proposed and agreed among the coordinators to approach jointly the Thematic Directorates. To this end:

- the coordinator of the IncoNet EECA re-drafted the document '*Support for the identification of suitable International Cooperation Activities in various FP7 Themes*' and circulated to the other coordinators for comments.
- A consolidated version was prepared bearing almost the same title but trying to clarify the difference (see Part 3, Item 2 above) between policy dialogue and identification of topics for SICAs. This document, '*Support for the identification of suitable Specific International Cooperation Activities (SICAs) in various FP7 Themes*' (Annex IV) was sent to the representatives of the Thematic Priorities on behalf of all INCONET coordinators on 4 March 2008 for comments.

5 FOLLOW-UP

In addition to the aforementioned mailing and since no comments were sent in the mean time, the coordinator of IncoNet EECA contacted several Thematic Priorities in order to seek their views on the issue of SICAs. The results of these contacts (through meetings or telephone conversation) are summarized in Annex V. As it can be seen in this document, the approaches of the different Thematic Priorities are very in-homogeneous and could be grouped as follows:

- Thematic Priorities that are more or less ready to use the tool (i.e. Thematic Workshops) the IncoNet EECA is proposing;
- Thematic Priorities that would prefer a rather considerable re-shaping of the tool (e.g. a Brokerage event like activity rather than a Thematic Workshop);
- Thematic Priorities that do not foresee SICAs or have their own activities to identify them and therefore are not ready to work jointly with the IncoNet EECA on this activity.

6 CONCLUSION

The discussions at the 'kick-off' event among the representatives of the different Thematic Priorities but also among the other INCONET coordinators, showed that the issue of the role of SICAs and in particular the ways to identify them was not always perceived in the same way. Therefore, the decision to address the Thematic Priorities jointly was important since it contributed to the clarification of the views and of the aims of the proposed activities within the INCONETs.

The feedback from the Thematic Priorities on the proposed approach are very in-homogeneous: some of them are not ready to cooperate with the INCONETs on the issue of SICAs while others are considering cooperation under various forms that need to be discussed.

Under these circumstances, the planned two series of Thematic Workshops (6 for this year and 6 in 2010) may need to be revised or even re-oriented in some cases. The contacts with the Thematic Priorities will continue and decisions could be taken at the IncoNet EECA Management Board meeting in June 2008.

The aforementioned facts show that the role of INCONETs as tools for the support of the International Cooperation Activities in the various Thematic Priorities has not been acknowledged thus far.

7 ANNEXES

See next page

Annex I





S&T cooperation in the region

- **Bilateral cooperation programmes**
- **EU Framework programmes**
 - INTAS;
 - Many projects of horizontal character (ResPot, SCOPE-EAST, etc.)
- **S&T Cooperation within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)**
 - Adoption and review of an Action Plan
 - Permanent Working Group on S&T

G.Bonas, IncoNet EECA Brussels

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**IncoNet
EECA**

The EECA region: A variable geometry landscape

EU - Russia

EU - Ukraine

EU

BSEC

EECA

Brussels

3



IncoNet EECA: overall structure

Three parallel but interlinked 'layers' addressing:

- I. Policy aspects;
- II. An enhanced participation in FP7;
- III. Analyses, Quality and Dissemination



IncoNet EECA: I. Policy aspects

- **Enhancing bi-regional S&T Policy Dialogue**
 - *S&T Regional Policy Dialogue Platform*
 - *S&T Policy Dialogue Platform with Russia*
 - *S&T Policy Dialogue Platform with Ukraine*
 - *BSEC WG S&T*
- **Coordination with other EU policies**
 - **ENP-I and Four Common Spaces with Russia**
 - **DCEC for Central Asia**
 - **LLL Programme**
 - **CIP Programme**



Policy Dialogue Platforms

- **Policy makers** (level of Director for International Cooperation) **from:**
 - All EU Member States;
 - All EECA countries;
 - The European Commission (as observers)
- **The IncoNet EECA partners act as facilitators** (secretariat and input for the platforms)



II. Increase participation in FP7

- **Strengthening the participation of researchers from the region in FP7**
 - Increase participation in the 'core' activities of FP7
 - Input for SICA: Thematic workshops
 - Participation in 'People', 'Ideas' and 'Capacities' Programmes of FP7
- **Support the NCPs/NIPs in EECA**

G.Bonas, IncoNet EECA Brussels

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Illa. Analyses, Monitoring and Review

- **Analysis of S&T cooperation patterns**
- **Improving S&T Indicators**
- **Mapping of key Institutes**
- **Analysis of national policies towards global challenges**

G.Bonas, IncoNet EECA Brussels

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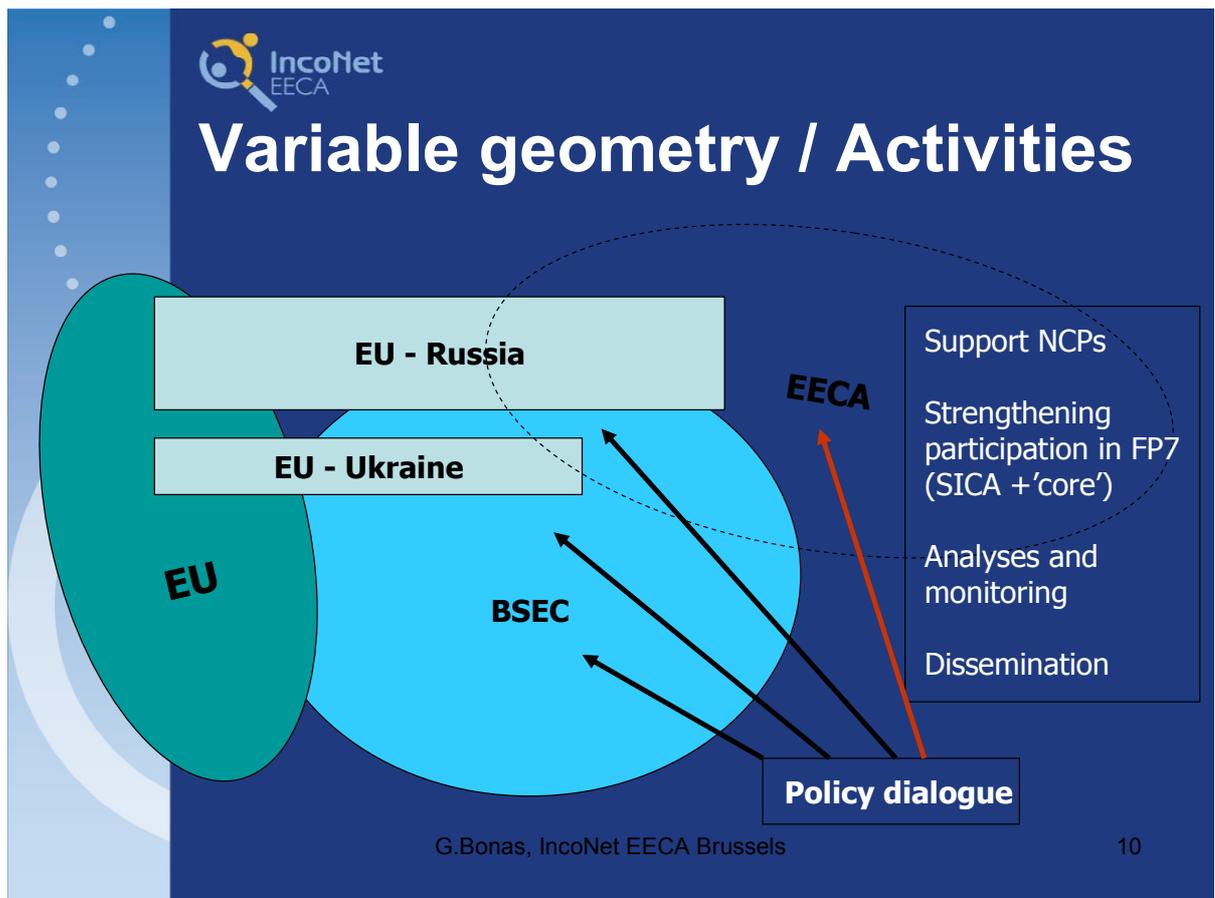


IIIb. Quality and Dissemination

- **Quality of activities**
 - **Quality of Deliverables**
 - **Sustainability of actions**
 - **Links with other projects targeting EECA**
- **Dissemination**
 - **Portal**
 - **Central Information Office**
 - **Conferences (BSEC, EECA)**

G.Bonas, IncoNet EECA Brussels

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IncoNet EECA: Technical data

- **Large consortium of 23 Partners coordinated by the ICBSS, including**
 - **EECA: 9 countries**
 - Plus activities for Kirghizstan, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan
 - **EU (and AC): 13 countries**
- **Duration: 4 years**
- **Start date: 1/1/2008**



In Conclusion

- **The IncoNet EECA is a large and complex project involving: policy dialogue, specific actions to increase participation from EECA in FP7 and a series of studies**
- **It is a challenging project for the consortium, and at the same time**
- **It is a unique instrument for the stakeholders (MS, EECA, EC) for the achievement of an enhanced EU – EECA cooperation in S&T**

G.Bonas, IncoNet EECA Brussels

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Information on the project can be found:

- At the project's web site (DLR):

www.inco-eeca.net

- At the ICBSS's web site: www.icbss.org

Thank you for your attention!

Annex II

IncoNet EECA

Support for the identification of suitable International Cooperation Activities in various FP7 Themes

Introduction

The IncoNet EECA project in addition to its activities dealing with policy dialogue, monitoring and studies, it includes a task dedicated to the “*Knowledge based support for SICA in the Thematic Priorities*”. This task mainly consists of two series of 6 Thematic Workshops aiming at the identification of topics of mutual EU – EECA interest. The organization of these Workshops should be jointly implemented by the respective Themes, the International Cooperation Directorate (‘Capacities’ Programme) and the IncoNet EECA consortium.

It should be noted that even if the aforementioned activity is primarily dedicated to the identification of suitable SICAs, it does not exclude the identification of other type of International Cooperation activities that could be more appropriate for a specific Theme (e.g. recommended participation of EECA countries in ‘core’ activities of the Workprogramme, etc.).

Tentative Themes

The following Themes have been pre-selected: Health, Environment, Energy, Food-Agriculture-Fisheries-Biotechnology, Nanotechnologies, ICT. However, changes could be envisaged if necessary.

Number of Workshops, schedule, venue

For every Theme, two workshops are foreseen. The first one is scheduled to take place during 2008 in order to provide a ‘stock’ of possible topics for the revisions of the respective Work Programmes in spring 2009 and summer 2010. In a similar way, a second series of Workshops is scheduled two years later (2010) for the revisions of Work Programmes in 2011 and 2012.

The Workshops will take place in Greece (2), Bulgaria (2), Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Attendance

Approximately 25 persons will attend every workshop, including: Experts from the region, Experts from EU MS and AC, European Commission officials.

Selection of Experts

For Experts from the region, letters will be addressed to Ministries responsible for S&T, to the National Academies of Sciences, to the NCP structures etc. The letters will include a typical profile for the Experts to be identified and will state clearly that these Experts are only proposed (i.e. not nominated).

Experts from EU will be identified through the Evaluators database, EU NCP structures, etc.

The final selection will be done by the relevant Theme and/or the Coordinator of IncoNet EECA, and taking into account the profiles, nationalities, gender, etc.

Background documents for Experts

Every Expert will receive in advance the relevant Specific Programme, the Work Programme and any other document proposed by the Theme.

Input papers

Every Expert could be asked to provide prior to the Workshop an input paper of approx. 2-3 pages following agreed guidelines, introducing for example parts of the Work Programme that could be of particular interest for the region.

Duration and Agenda for every Workshop

Every Workshop should last two full days and could be organized as follows:

- 1st half day: brief review of the input papers, keeping however the formal presentations to a minimum.
- 2nd half day: exchange of views and definition of the main lines of the output document/conclusions. Drafting begins under the responsibility of a Rapporteur.
- 3rd half day: Drafting continuous and ends.
- 4th half day: consolidation of the output document/conclusions.

Output

At the end of the workshop a document reporting the conclusions should be finalized including a series of possible topics of particular importance for the region, which could be included in subsequent revisions of the Work Programme.

For every topic a title will be proposed, a brief description of the research work envisaged, as well as a justification of the importance of the proposed topic in general and for the region in particular.

Funding of the Workshops

The funding of the Workshops is secured through the budget of the IncoNet EECA project.

Launching of the activity

This activity should be considered as a tool for the definition of the International Cooperation activities in the selected Themes. Therefore, the information and involvement from the very beginning of the scientific officers responsible for International Cooperation in every Theme, is of paramount importance.

To this end, the meeting of the INCONET coordinators is a unique opportunity for the presentation of this approach to the aforementioned stakeholders, and for a first exchange of views on it. The contacts should then continue on an individual basis with every Theme in order to further 'shape' the characteristics of the Workshop dedicated to the Theme.

It should be noted that similar activities (i.e. Thematic Workshops) are also foreseen in INCONETs for other geographic regions.

Annex III

1st Meeting of the INCONET projects coordinators

Brussels, 30-31 January 2008

Minutes

During the **first session**, officials from the European Commission (Capacities – INCO Programme) presented the main objectives and tools for the implementation of the International cooperation activities in the 7th FP.

Mr. A. Damiani stressed the importance for a regional approach and the reasons that are justifying it (too many countries to deal with individually, common denominators and shared interest in the regions, growing role of supranational dimension, role of bi-regional Summits, etc.).

Mrs. S. Gruber mentioned that ‘speaking with one voice’ in multilateral activities is a clear demand from the research community (cf. Questionnaire for the Green Paper), but is also an open issue that needs to be tackled. However, the discussion showed that even the meaning of ‘speaking with one voice’ is not understood the same way by everyone.

Mr. R. Burmanjer, mentioned that the taking-up by the Thematic Priorities of the INCONET projects activities is an issue to consider as high priority.

The **second session** gave the opportunity to the INCONET projects to present their approach and activities to the representatives of various FP7 Themes. This session was also the occasion for the INCONET coordinators to observe the differences that exist in the approaches and the regional context for every project.

The **third session** was dedicated to the debriefing of the discussions/contacts with the representatives of the Themes; to the exchange of views among the coordinators and to the presentation of the INCONTACT project.

The general impression was that the meeting was useful since it provided the opportunity for a direct contact with the various Themes, from the very beginning of the INCONET projects. There was however a feeling that there is a lot to do in order to work hand by hand with the various Themes and to develop synergies. In this

context, Mr. Ph. Froissard mentioned that direct contacts between the INCONET projects and the Themes should be encouraged, while keeping always informed the INCO Scientific Officers responsible for the projects on the initiatives that are proposed to the Themes.

- The EU-Com will provide all INCONET-coordinators with the list of contact persons for international cooperation in the thematic directorates (mainly the RIC-List).

A long discussion took place on the role the INCONET projects could play in the definition of **Specific International Cooperation Activities (SICAs)** in the Themes. In particular, it seems that there is a confusion between the 'priority setting' through the policy dialogue platforms to be supported by the projects (a medium term goal) and the contribution in the definition of suitable SICAs in the various Themes at short term (e.g. in the revisions of the Work Programmes of the Themes in 2009). This contribution includes among other possibilities the organization of Thematic Workshops, which is already planned in some INCONET projects. In this context:

- Mr. Froissard mentioned that the revision process of Work Programmes will be annual for all the Themes (with the exception of Transport: bi-annual, only for this year), and it will take place in spring – early summer every year. It is therefore too late to organize Thematic Workshops for this year's revision but instead, workshops could be organized until November 2008 at the latest for the 2009's revision of the Work Programme. For this year's revision, the use of the conclusions of previous initiatives (e.g. MED7, ResPot, etc.) could be an option.
- Several participants proposed to develop and adopt a joint/common position when approaching the Themes on the issue of SICAs. Mr. G. Bonas proposed to the group to re-draft a document he prepared on that subject and to circulate it by Tuesday 5/2 in order to collect the views/comments by Monday 11/2.

Another key issue that has been discussed was the **political support** that is necessary **for the launching of policy dialogue platforms** in the regions they don't exist (e.g. EECA, CAARST, etc.). In this respect, letters from the European Commission and the EU Presidency were considered by the INCONET coordinators as the best way to ensure the necessary high level political push. Mr. J. Sonnenburg mentioned that a similar approach has been used for the launching of the Steering Platform for the Western Balkan countries two years ago. He also mentioned that the Commission is taking part in the process/functioning of the platforms and that CREST could also discuss this issue.

Mr. R. Burmanjer stated that there is an issue of inter-institutional platforms to take into account (e.g. the relation between CAARST and NEPAD for Africa) but the point is important and the Commission will examine every case/platform to define the optimum way for a political support.

The presentation of the **project INCONTACT** (Transnational cooperation among NCPs for INCO) raised two issues:

- i. The confusion that could occur or at least the necessity for coordination between the NCP/NIP structures developed and supported in the Third countries by INCO

and those that are often under development in the same countries by some Themes. Mr. M. Genovese proposed to provide the list of these activities of the Themes in order to develop synergies and avoid overlaps.

ii. The necessity to concentrate the INCO funding in the support of NCP/NIP in the Third countries since the activities foreseen in the INCONET projects for that purpose are probably not sufficient.

- It was suggested to all INCONETS to use the WIKI, elaborated within the INCONTAT-project during the next months, to publish useful country specific “How to participate in FP7” information.
- It was recommended to work on a joint calendar for all INCONETS + INCONTACT.

The **financial and administrative issues** for the implementation of the contracts are of particular concern. Mr. R. Rodriguez insisted in particular in the difficulties that are faced by partners in Third countries to understand and implement the necessary procedures. The availability of a simple document including the most frequently used procedures (or problems) has been considered as an urgent need. Mr. Rodriguez volunteered to collect and compile a document of that type (FAQ) on the basis of input from other coordinators and/or the Commission’s services.

Other issues

- An email will be sent by the Commission to the partners in the projects asking them to declare if they intend to use the 60% transition rate for indirect cost, since such possibility was not available in the Electronic system at the time of preparation of the proposals and contracts, for technical reasons.
- The name of the Financial Officer responsible for every project will be communicated to the INCONET coordinators soon.
- Instead of a CIRCA site the possibility to use the portal developed by the MIRA INCONET will be examined. In particular, the needs/requirements for an INCONET website will be collected to see if they are compatible with the aforementioned portal.
 - Mr. Sonnenburg and Mr. Rodriguez volunteered to work out ToR’s for a joint website. In the light of the ToR’s it should be decided whether the INCONET’s will use CIRCA or something else.
- The coordinators should check the correctness of the summary of their project that is ready to be published by the Commission. The Commission will check, whether the “LOGOS” will find a place within the publication.
- The Commission intends to organize meetings of the INCONET coordinators twice a year.

Annex IV

Support for the identification of suitable Specific International Cooperation Activities (SICAs) in various FP7 Themes

Introduction

The INCONET type projects according to the FP7 – Capacities Work Programme are aiming at the implementation of “bi-regional coordination of S&T cooperation including priority setting and definition of S&T cooperation policies”.

In order to achieve their aim, the INCONETs will support Policy Dialogue Platforms with different regions of the world, involving high-level officials. These Platforms will contribute to the ‘definition of S&T cooperation policies’, to be implemented by the EU Member States, the Target countries and/or the European Commission, as a medium term perspective.

In addition to the aforementioned activity, most of the recently started 6 INCONET projects are including activities that could be of particular interest for the definition of suitable Specific International Cooperation Activities (SICAs) in the various Themes of FP7, as a short term perspective.

The present document is dealing exclusively with these particular activities (i.e. definition of suitable SICAs) and it is addressed to the EC Directorates in charge of the implementation of the FP7 Themes.

Proposed approach

1. The inclusion of SICAs in the forthcoming revisions of the Work Programme of every Theme remains the responsibility of every Theme and of its stakeholders (e.g. Expert Advisory Group, Programme Committee, Commission services, etc.). The INCONET projects do not intervene in this process. However, if there is a will to include SICAs, the proposed approach can be used and, therefore, the INCONET projects act as facilitators in the process.
2. For the definition of suitable SICAs (of mutual EU – target region interest) a tool is proposed (i.e. Thematic Workshops), as well as a methodology for the implementation of these workshops.
3. The output of the Thematic Workshops will constitute a ‘stock’ of possible topics to be included in the definition of future Work Programmes of the respective Theme and for the respective region of the world. The final choice will once again be under the responsibility of the Theme and its stakeholders.

4. The proposed methodology for the preparation and implementation of the Thematic Workshops is attached as Annex. Nevertheless, the methodology can be modified to match the particularities of every Theme and of every region, if necessary. This should be done through direct contacts between the respective thematic Directorates and the concerned INCONET project, involving also possibly the respective Programme Committees in an appropriate manner.

Advantages of the proposed approach

- The process will be transparent and more or less homogeneous across the Themes. Instead of ad-hoc initiatives for the definition of suitable SICAs in the various Themes, a standard methodology and a tool (Thematic Workshops) is proposed.
- The stakeholders at EC and target region level will be informed about the initiative from the beginning and will participate in the process by proposing suitable experts (see methodology in Annex).
- The research community (at EU and target region level) will also participate actively in the process since the proposed topics will be the result of brainstorming sessions of qualified experts.
- The proposed approach takes advantage of a newly established FP7 tool (i.e. the INCONET projects) and provides the means to the different Themes to implement a comprehensive approach for the definition of suitable SICAs. If however similar activities are already under implementation in some Themes, duplication of efforts will be avoided through a close interaction with the thematic EC Directorates.
- Last but not least, it should be noted that even if the proposed approach is primarily dedicated to the identification of suitable SICAs, it does not exclude the identification of other type of activities with a focus on International Cooperation that could be more appropriate for a specific Theme and/or region (e.g. topics in the Calls with 'recommended' participation of countries from a certain region, dedicated calls for the Western Balkan countries, etc.).

Follow-up

What is now necessary is to obtain the feedback from the different thematic Directorates. In particular the following questions need to be addressed:

- a. Is the thematic Directorate planning to include SICAs in the 2009 revision of its Work Programme (or in the following 2-3 years)?
- b. What are the thematic Directorate's views on the proposed approach? Is the Theme planning its own activities and therefore duplication could occur?
- c. If the thematic Directorate is willing to use the proposed approach: i) for which region(s) would it be and, ii) with whom the INCONETs should enter into contact?

Attachment

Methodology for the preparation and implementation of Thematic Workshops

Number of Workshops, focussing the themes, schedule, venue

In principle, one Thematic Workshop is foreseen for every targeted Theme, which will provide a 'stock' of suitable topics (of mutual EU – target region interest) to be included in one or more revisions of the Theme's Work Programme in the forthcoming years. However, in at least one INCONET, two series of Workshops are foreseen in order to 'refresh' the proposed topics.

In order to raise efficiency it is most suitable to narrow down the thematic of each workshop i.e. through matching the (wider) topics mentioned in the Specific Programmes with the scientific strengths and particular needs of a dedicated partner region. Here, building to some extent on previous analytical work at national and EC level should be envisaged.

The Workshops should be implemented in principle during 2008 (e.g. May to October) in order to provide an input in November for the revisions of the respective Work Programmes in spring 2009 (and the following years).

The Workshops will take place in EU MS or in Third countries according to the provisions of every INCONET.

Attendance

On average 25 persons will attend every workshop, including: Experts from the region, Experts from EU MS and AC, European Commission officials. This given average number can be seen as an optimum for a brainstorming session.

Selection of Experts

For Experts from the region, letters will be addressed to Ministries responsible for S&T, to the NCP/NIP structures in the region and to other important stakeholders of the respective region (e.g. the National Academies of Sciences for the EECA region). This way an ownership of the policy level in the partner country will be ensured for setting priorities for the S&T cooperation of the respective partner country with the EU.

The letters will include a typical profile for the Experts to be identified and will state clearly that these Experts are only proposed (i.e. not nominated).

Experts from EU will be identified through Evaluators databases, EU NCP structures, Programme Committee members, etc.

The final selection will be done in close cooperation with the relevant thematic Directorate, taking into account the experts' profiles, knowledge of FP7 in the specific theme, nationalities, academic or industrial background, gender, etc.

Background documents for Experts

Every Expert will receive in advance the relevant Specific Programme, the Work Programme and any other document proposed by the Theme.

Input papers

Every Expert could be asked to provide prior to the Workshop a brief input paper of approx. 2-3 pages following agreed guidelines, introducing for example parts of the Work Programme that could be of particular interest for the region.

Duration and Agenda for every Workshop

Every Workshop should last two full days and could be organized as follows:

- 1st half day: brief review of the input papers, keeping however the formal presentations to a minimum.
- 2nd half day: exchange of views and definition of the main lines of the output document/conclusions. Drafting begins under the responsibility of a Rapporteur.
- 3rd half day: Drafting continuous and ends.
- 4th half day: consolidation of the output document/conclusions.

Output

At the end of the workshop a document reporting the conclusions should be finalized including a list of e.g. 5 to 10 possible topics of particular importance for the region, which could be included in one or more subsequent revisions of the Work Programme, depending on the policy of the respective Theme.

For every topic a title will be proposed, a brief description of the research work envisaged, as well as a justification of the importance of the proposed topic in general and for the region in particular. The justification is of particular importance since it will provide the necessary arguments for the selection of the topic by the Theme and its stakeholders (e.g. Programme Committee).

Funding of the Workshops

The funding of the Workshops is secured through the budget of the INCONET projects.

Launching of the activity

This activity should be considered as a tool for the definition of the International Cooperation activities in the selected Themes. Therefore, the information and involvement from the very beginning of the scientific officers responsible for International Cooperation in every Theme and of the respective Programme Committee, is of paramount importance. Contacts should be established on an individual basis between every INCONET project and the respective Theme in order to further 'shape' the characteristics of the Workshop dedicated to the Theme.

Annex V

Brief report from the discussions with Scientific Officers from the Thematic Priorities Industrial Technologies (Nanotechnologies), Food – Agriculture – Fisheries and Biotechnology, Environment and Health

On 4 March 2008 the ICBSS sent to the Thematic Directorates of DG Research (and to the concerned IncoNet EECA partners) on behalf of all the INCONET coordinators the document ‘Support for the identification of suitable SICAs in various FP7 Themes’.

As a follow up activity and since written replies were not received, contacts and meetings were made with scientific officers of the aforementioned Thematic Priorities. The summary of the views of the different Thematic Priorities are as follows:

Industrial Technologies (Nanotechnologies)

They see 4 ways of International cooperation:

- a) Participation in the core part of FP7 (‘opening of the programmes’);
- b) Inclusion of topics with ‘recommended’ participation from country(ies) or region(s);
- c) Coordinated calls and funds, i.e. FP call and National call;
- d) SICAs.

Topics under b) are identified through policy dialogue fora (i.e. partnership/cooperation agreements and expert groups under them). For c) many difficulties exist due to practical/procedural reasons.

The Theme is not in favor of SICAs since it splits the budget and the Work Programme. In this context, workshops as the ones proposed can create false expectations, since only very few SICAs will be included in the Work Programme. For example in the Work Programme 2009 only 1 SICA is proposed for one specific region.

The Theme will see if the ‘tool’ proposed could be helpful in a different way e.g. more as a brokerage event.

Food – Agriculture – Fisheries and Biotechnology

This Thematic Priority continues to have probably the larger number of International Cooperation activities (SICAs, ‘recommended’ participations, etc.) in its Work Programme.

It plans an EU – Russia symposium on Biotechnology and Food (October 08) in Moscow. This symposium could provide input for the revision of the Work Programme in 2009 and could also play the role of a brokerage event.

In this context, the Thematic Workshop proposed is interesting to the Thematic Priority since it can have a regional character, which is complementary to the EU – Russia one. The objectives should include the identification of the scientific challenges and the justification of the interest for research work with scientists from the region.

There is a need to ‘re-shape’ the document on the Thematic Workshops in order to adapt it to the plans of the Thematic Priority in view of a possible event in autumn this year.

Environment

This Thematic Priority is also including a considerable number of SICAs and topics with recommended participation of ICPC in its Work Programme. Later this year a bi-regional EU – Africa workshop is planned.

The Thematic Workshop proposed could be of interest but the content and timing need to be further discussed during May.

Health

This Thematic Priority foresees some SICAs open to all International Cooperation Partner Countries (ICPC), i.e. no region specific. In addition, some specific activities with Russia in which the Russian side will fund its own participation are foreseen.

The proposed IncoNet EECA approach is of particular interest to the Thematic Priority since it constitutes a structured approach for the identification of suitable topics. The Thematic Priority is ready to co-organize with Inconet EECA a Thematic Workshop during October/November 08. However, an issue to be cleared for the first Workshop is whether all the Specific Programme will be open for discussion or (most probably) one or maximum two out of the three ‘pillars’ (chapters) of this Programme.

There is a need to ‘re-shape’ the document on the Thematic Workshops in order to adapt it to the views of the Thematic Priority.

Information Society

No direct contact has been made yet. Since this Programme has its own means for the identification of suitable activities of International Cooperation, it seems that there will be no interest for the approach proposed.