

Orientation Paper prepared in connection with the FP7 2013 Work Programme for the International Cooperation Activities of the Capacities programme

Important notice:

This paper is made public at an early stage in the adoption process of the work programme to provide potential applicants with the currently expected main lines of the 2013 work programme. It is a working document not yet endorsed by the Commission and its content does not in any way prejudge the subsequent modifications by the Commission, neither the subsequent formal opinion of the Programme Committee nor the final decision of the Commission.

The final adoption and the publication of the work programme by the Commission are expected in mid-July 2012. Only the adopted work programme will have legal value.

Information and topic descriptions indicated in this orientation paper may not appear in the final work programme; and likewise, new elements may be introduced at a later stage. No essential information, such as indicative budgets, will be provided by the Commission until the final work programme is adopted. Any such information disclosed by any other party shall not be construed as having been endorsed by or affiliated to the Commission.

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ACTIVITIES OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Objective

To become competitive and play a leading role at world level, the European Union needs a strong and coherent international science and technology policy. The international actions carried out under the different programmes within the seventh Framework Programme will be implemented in the context of an overall international cooperation strategy.

This international policy has *three interdependent objectives*:

- to support European competitiveness through strategic partnerships with third countries in selected fields of science and by engaging the best third countries scientists to work in and with Europe;
- to facilitate contacts with partners in third countries with the aim of providing better access to research carried out elsewhere in the world;
- to address specific problems that third countries face or that have a global character, on the basis of mutual interest and mutual benefit.

I CONTEXT

Political landscape

Against the backdrop of the current economic situation and increased global competition, the Union has defined a strategy to support growth and job creation, Europe 2020. The Innovation Union Flagship initiative supports this strategy through specific commitments. Research and innovation are key drivers of competitiveness, jobs, sustainable growth and social progress.

The work programme 2013 aligns with, and contributes towards, the objectives of Europe 2020, the Innovation Union Flagship, and other EU policies. There is a determined focus on fostering new ideas, supporting world class teams tackling significant societal challenges, and on ensuring that the fruits of our investments can be properly exploited.

In this way the work programme provides for a smooth transition towards the new research and innovation programme for 2014-2020, Horizon 2020.

Approach for 2013

The 2013 Activities of International Cooperation will support the international Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy and Innovation Union Flagship Initiative and ensure transition between the FP7 and Horizon 2020 Programmes. Activities will therefore promote the development of mutually beneficial partnerships, by focusing in particular on tackling common societal challenges, by extending cooperation beyond research to cover also innovation issues of common interest, and by fostering the establishment of a level-playing field in research and innovation. They will also reinforce the external dimension of the European Research Area (ERA) by promoting the

attractiveness of Europe in the world, fostering coordination and joint actions between Member States and/or Associated Countries, and contributing to the implementation of the strategic framework for international Science and Technology (S&T) cooperation¹ and of initiatives of the Strategic Forum for International Cooperation (SFIC).²

The 2013 activities will:

- Ensure continuity in supporting the development of cooperation with regions and countries for which ongoing actions are coming to an end in 2012/2013;
- Support the coordination of national policies and development of joint activities between Member States and/or Associated Countries and third countries where these actions are not focused thematically or their focus is not defined a priori;
- Raise awareness in third countries about Horizon 2020;
- Support a new activity of mutual benefit to bridge the gap between research and innovation in European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries.

The 2013 activities will build on the experiences and results of previous and ongoing actions of this programme and will take into account and promote complementarities with activities carried out under other EU programmes notably those related to external policies.

Innovation dimension of the activities and bridging towards Horizon 2020:

In line with the Horizon 2020 objectives, this work programme promotes cooperation on innovation activities closer to market and focused on societal challenges:

- bi-regional and bilateral cooperation activities (INCO-NET, BILAT) will promote cooperation across the whole STI chain in view of fostering the translation of research results into innovative market products and services.

- a new activity targeting ENP countries (R2I-ENP) will specifically address the gap between research and innovation, focusing on improving competences and cooperation between producers and users of knowledge to tackle societal challenges of common interest. This activity will complement INCO-NET and BILAT actions with ENP countries.

Dissemination actions

By their very nature, activities of this work programme include actions for promoting exchange and dissemination of information, knowledge transfer and stakeholders engagement. The results of the different activities will notably feed the STI policy dialogues with targeted countries and regions.

Overall expected impact

By promoting the development of STI cooperation with targeted countries and regions in areas of common interest and mutual benefit, the activities will contribute to:

¹ Document available at http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/com_2008_588_en.pdf

² Council conclusions concerning a European partnership for international scientific and technological cooperation, 16017/08 of 2 December 2008.

- strengthen EU STI and economic competitiveness, notably through improved access to knowledge, expertise and markets in third countries;
- tackle more efficiently and effectively major societal challenges;
- support EU external policies objectives, by helping less developed regions and countries strengthen and make better use of their STI competences for their socio-economic development.

II CONTENT OF CALLS

This section describes all the topics for which proposals will be called in this work programme. The topics are organised around 9 main Activities.

Activity 7.1. Bi-regional coordination of S&T cooperation including priority-setting and definition of S&T cooperation policies (FP7-INCO-2013-1, INCO-NET)

This INCO-NET call focuses on addressing societal challenges, supporting policy dialogue, and developing cooperation on innovation.

7.1.1. Areas

The regions targeted by the call are:

- Arab Gulf countries;³
- Central Asia;⁴
- Danube region;⁵
- Eastern Partnership;⁶
- Pacific region, including Overseas Countries and Territories;⁷
- Southern Asian countries⁸ (preparatory action, see section 7.1.3.2).

³ Countries covered are: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

⁴ Countries covered are: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

⁵ Countries covered are those currently involved in the Danube Cooperation Process (of which eight are EU Member States): Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine.

⁶ Countries covered are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

⁷ Countries and Territories covered are: Australia, New-Zealand, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Pitcairn and Wallis and Futuna.

⁸ Countries covered are: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

7.1.2. Technical content/ scope

The INCO-NET call aims at:

- Supporting the institutional bi-regional policy dialogue in Science and Technology;
- Strengthening the bi-regional cooperation between research and innovation actors, especially in the context of the upcoming Horizon 2020 programme;
- Monitoring progress in the bi-regional STI cooperation.

7.1.3. Proposed activities

7.1.3.1. Proposed activities common to the Arab Gulf countries, Central Asia, the Danube region, Eastern Partnership, and the Pacific Region

The INCO-NET actions targeting the Arab Gulf countries, Central Asia, the Danube region, the Eastern Partnership countries, or the Pacific Region will:

A *Focus on major societal challenges*

The proposed actions will seek to avoid dispersion of efforts and maximise results and impact by focusing on 2 to 3 societal challenges from those defined in the Commission proposal for Horizon 2020.⁹

B *Support policy dialogue*

C *Foster cooperation between stakeholders*

D *Ensure effectiveness and impact*

The actions will establish balanced and broad partnerships, ensuring adequate involvement of public authorities, and other stakeholders (national/regional agencies, research organisations, industry and civil society) of participating countries. They will build on the results of existing bi-regional initiatives, including ongoing actions, and should clearly describe advance beyond state-of-the-art. While focusing on a few societal challenges of mutual interest, the actions should have a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach. Proposals addressing research focused on a single societal challenge will be declared ineligible.

Specific attention will be given to exploit synergies between the two individual actions targeting Eastern Partnership and Central Asia countries and those actions should include provisions to ensure such coordination.

⁹ Societal challenges defined in the Commission proposal "Horizon 2020 - The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation", COM(2011) 808.

7.1.3.2. Proposed activities for the preparatory action targeting Southern Asian countries

The action targeting the Southern Asian countries¹⁰ will prepare the ground for a possible future INCO-NET and as such will:

- Provide up to date analytical evidence on key players and competences in the targeted countries;
- Identify the societal challenges on which to focus the cooperation and justify them in terms of common interest and mutual benefit;
- Support, where relevant, the training and extension of the network of FP Contacts in the region,¹¹ in particular with the view of increasing awareness about cooperation opportunities offered by Horizon 2020.

7.1.4. Implementation and management

7.1.4.1. Funding scheme(s)

The funding scheme that applies is the 'Coordination and Support Action' (coordinating action) for activities described in section 7.1.3.1 and 'Coordination and Support Action' (supporting action) for the activities described in section 7.1.3.2. The financial support from the EU will take the form of a grant. Under this scheme, no support will be provided for the research and innovation activities themselves.

All proposed activities should be properly described, justified and budgeted in the proposal.

7.1.4.2. Participants

The consortium must include participants from Member States and/or Associated countries. In addition to the minimum number of participants as set out in the rules for participation, proposals must include at least one participant from the region targeted by the INCO-NET action (additional eligibility criterion, see III.1).

Preference will be given to INCO-NET actions involving the participation of a significant number of third countries of the region targeted by the INCO-NET action. A high coverage of the region will be considered essential to guarantee the success of these actions.

Preference will also be given to INCO-NET actions involving the participation of a significant number of Member States and/or Associated countries and including plans to widen dissemination activities to Member States and/or Associated countries activities not represented in the action consortium.

¹⁰ Countries covered are: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

¹¹ The activities related to FP contacts should be carried out in synergy with the ongoing 'INCONTACT' action (www.ncp-incontact.eu/) and its planned follow-up action (see 7.4).

The participation of additional partners from countries neighbouring the targeted region is welcome provided added-value to the action is clearly demonstrated.

Consortium composition, responsibilities and volume of activities should be balanced between Member States and/or Associated countries and third countries participants.

The actions described under section 7.1.3.1 will set up an advisory board composed of selected authorities' representatives and if relevant, of high level experts, originating from the Member States and/or Associated countries and the targeted region.

The funding of participants from industrialised third countries would be allowed for this Activity if it is considered essential for the success of the actions.

The consortium should promote gender equality.

7.1.4.3. Areas open to this call

Each proposal must target only one single Area covered by the call (see 7.1.1). As it is important to have as many regions covered as possible, the following scheme for selection of actions will be applied. The highest ranked proposal per region of the work programme will be funded, provided that it has passed thresholds of all evaluation criteria. If budget is remaining, this could be allocated to the other proposals according to the following criteria: the best proposal(s) in the overall ranking (considering all regions together) will be selected, if it can convincingly address a different set of societal challenges than the ones tackled by the highest ranked proposal for the concerned region. In such case, coordination of actions targeting the same region will be ensured thus avoiding duplication of activities and fragmentation of effort.

7.1.5. Expected impact

The bi-regional cooperation will be reinforced through the focusing of activities on 2 to 3 major societal challenges of mutual interest. This will also lead to a reduction in the fragmentation of effort and to a more targeted use of available resources. The INCO-NET actions will support the policy dialogue and contribute to the definition and implementation of joint strategic agendas for research, development and innovation.

An increased level of cooperation through the whole research to innovation chain will be achieved via the development or strengthening of partnerships, the preparation of joint collaborative actions and programmes, and improved coherence of framework conditions for innovation.

It is expected the bi-regional relation on Science, Technology and Innovation will be made sustainable through an uptake of the coordination mechanisms by the stakeholders involved.

The actions will also result in an increased participation of the regions concerned in Horizon 2020.

The expected impact will also depend on the number of participating third countries of the region concerned and their engagement in the action.

The exploitation of the results will be enhanced through appropriate communication and dissemination actions.

Activity 7.2. Bilateral coordination for the enhancement and development of S&T Partnerships (FP7-INCO-2013-2, BILAT)

This BILAT call targets individual countries that concluded or are in the process of negotiating bilateral S&T agreements with the European Union.¹²

7.2.1. Areas:

The countries targeted by the call are:

Area 1:¹³ Canada, India, Japan, Republic of Korea

Area 2: Algeria, Egypt, Mexico, Tunisia

7.2.2. Technical content/ scope

The BILAT call aims at:

- Supporting the institutional dialogue under the bilateral S&T agreement between the EU and the targeted country;
- Strengthening bilateral cooperation between research and innovation actors, especially in the context of the upcoming Horizon 2020 programme;
- Monitoring progress in the bilateral STI cooperation.

7.2.3. Proposed activities

The new BILAT actions will seek to avoid dispersion of efforts and maximise results and impact by focusing on several specific societal challenges and industrial technologies from those defined in the Commission proposal for Horizon 2020.¹⁴ They will justify their focus in terms of common interest and potential for increasing mutually beneficial cooperation, taking into account existing cooperation and orientations resulting from policy dialogue with the country concerned.

Building on activities and results of previous initiatives,¹⁵ and demonstrating clear progress beyond state-of-the-art, the new actions will:

- Support the bilateral S&T policy dialogue and contribute to the implementation of the roadmap defined by the Joint S&T Cooperation Committee. In doing so, the action will be

¹² More information can be found on these agreements at <http://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/index.cfm?lg=en&pg=countries>

¹³ Industrialised Countries and BRICS.

¹⁴ Societal challenges and industrial technologies defined in the Commission proposal "Horizon 2020 - The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation", COM(2011) 808.

¹⁵ Including 'BILAT' and 'ACCESS4EU' actions.

designed with some flexibility¹⁶ to take into account new priorities defined in the bilateral policy dialogue between the EU and the country concerned;

- Encourage the best research and innovation actors (organisations and scientists) to use the Framework Programme as a platform for mutually beneficial cooperation by increasing the awareness about its activities, including through user friendly web-based information systems and brokerage and other networking events to facilitate the preparation of collaborative activities. Similar activities will promote European participation in relevant programmes funded by the targeted country, which are open to international cooperation;
- Identify and share best practices (e.g. related to technology transfer programmes, inter-sectoral mobility schemes, research-driven clusters, science and technology parks, etc...) aimed at fostering public-private partnerships in Member States/Associated countries as well as in the targeted third country;
- Organise activities (e.g. brokerage events, workshops, virtual fora and web-based information services) that contribute to bridging the gap between public and private research and innovation actors and the dissemination and exploitation of research results;
- Ensure coordination and coherence with other relevant actions funded by FP7 and Horizon 2020;
- Support the coordination of Member States and/or Associated Countries' research policies and programmes vis-à-vis the targeted third country (including relevant initiatives agreed in the SFIC)¹⁷
- Promote synergies with activities funded through other EU policies and programmes addressing the targeted country and facilitate the coordination of research actions and initiatives supported by the EU and those supported by Member States and/or Associated Countries to avoid duplication and develop synergies;
- Monitor and analyse (quantitatively and qualitatively) the evolution of the cooperation supported by the Framework Programme (and for Area 1 through the targeted country programmes open to Member States and/or Associated countries participation) and the factors affecting it;
- Support implementing a quality-control of FP Contacts activities in the targeted third country, and where appropriate the training and extension of the FP Contacts network;¹⁸
- Ensure the quality-control of action deliverables, including through an external review committee.

7.2.4. Additional activities for Area 1 of the Call:

In addition to the activities described above, proposals targeting the countries in Area 1 should also:

¹⁶ The detailed work-plan may include options in terms of activities or topics.

¹⁷ At present, pilot initiatives involving group of Member States and Associated Countries have been agreed for India, China, and the U.S.

¹⁸ The activities related to FP contacts should be carried out in synergy with the ongoing 'INCONTACT' action (www.ncp-incontact.eu/) and its planned follow-up action (see 7.4).

- Identify and support cooperation on issues related to framework conditions for research and innovation (e.g. Intellectual Property Rights protection, standards, regulations, innovative public procurement) with the view to establish a 'level playing field' and facilitate the deployment of innovative products and services;
- Promote the twinning of research organisations/laboratories between on one hand Member States and/or Associated Countries, and on the other hand the third country concerned, through exchange of staff, sharing of good practices, and identification of future joint actions;
- Study the feasibility of bringing together representations of European research organisations in the targeted country, with the view to establish a joint liaison office.

7.2.5. Additional activities for Area 2 of the Call:

In addition to the activities described above, proposals targeting the countries in Area 2 should also analyse innovation support schemes and national innovation system profiles in the targeted country to facilitate the development of an integrated approach for bringing the results of common R&D or innovation actions into the marketplace. In this context and where appropriate, they should ensure close coordination with relevant ERA-WIDE and possible R2I-ENP actions (see Activity 7.9) involving these countries.

7.2.6. Implementation and management

7.2.6.1. Funding scheme(s)

The funding scheme that applies is the 'Coordination and Support Action' (supporting action). The financial support from the EU will take the form of a grant. Under this scheme, no support will be provided for the research activities themselves. Each action should last sufficiently long to contribute to sustainable networking structures and practices.

All proposed actions should be described, justified and budgeted in the proposal.

For actions targeting Area 1, matching funds from third countries are expected. Evidence of such commitment should be provided in the proposal and this will be taken into account in the evaluation (impact criterion).

7.2.6.2. Participants:

The consortium must include at least one participant from the targeted country (additional eligibility criterion). It is considered essential that the main third country participants be either public authorities responsible for the follow-up of the S&T cooperation agreement or any organisation, which has received the necessary mandate from the national authorities. The funding of participants from industrialised countries would be allowed for this activity if it is considered essential for the success of the action.

The participation of public authorities, national agencies and research organisations from Member States and/or Associated countries is encouraged. The participation of industry and SMEs associations from Member States and/or Associated countries and the targeted country is also encouraged.

The action should set up an advisory board that will be composed of representatives of authorities responsible for the S&T agreement and, where appropriate, of high level experts originating from the Member States and/or Associated countries and the targeted third country.

The consortium should promote gender equality.

7.2.6.3. Areas open to this call

In order to be eligible, the proposal must target only one country covered in the Areas of the call (see 7.2.1). One action per country will be funded, provided that it has passed thresholds of all evaluation criteria. Therefore, the highest ranked action for a given country will be selected.

7.2.7. Expected impact

The BILAT actions will support the policy dialogue and contribute to the definition and implementation of joint strategic agendas for research, development and innovation.

An increased level of cooperation through the whole research to innovation chain will be achieved via the development or strengthening of partnerships, the preparation of joint collaborative actions and programmes, and the improved coherence of framework conditions for innovation.

Impact will depend on the involvement of a large number of Member States and/or Associated countries in the coordination of policies and programmes vis-à-vis the targeted third country. It is therefore expected each action includes meaningful activities to widen participation of Member States and/or Associated countries.

It is expected the bilateral relation on Science, Technology and Innovation will be made sustainable through an uptake of the coordination mechanisms by the stakeholders involved.

Activity 7.3 Supporting the coordination of national policies and activities of Member States and/or Associated States on international S&T cooperation (FP7-INCO-2013-3, ERA-NET/ERA-NET PLUS)

7.3.1 The ERA-NET scheme

The objective of the ERA-NET scheme is to develop and strengthen the coordination of research programmes carried out at national or regional level through two specific actions:

- 'ERA-NET actions' - which provide a framework for actors implementing public research programmes to coordinate their activities;
- 'ERA-NET PLUS actions'- which, *in a limited number of cases*, can provide additional EU financial support to facilitate joint calls for proposals between national and/or regional programmes.

"*Research programmes carried out at national or regional level*" refers to entire research programmes, parts of such programmes or similar initiatives. Such programmes shall have all the following characteristics:

- a) Be strategically planned (i.e. be composed of a number of research actions focused on a defined subject area or set of problems, that are scheduled to run for a set period of time and that have a co-ordinated management);
- b) Be carried out at national or regional level;
- c) Be either financed or managed directly by national or regional public bodies, or by structures (e.g. agencies) closely related to, or mandated by, public authorities.

Under the ERA-NET scheme, national and regional authorities of the EU Member States and/or Associated Countries and targeted third countries identify research programmes they wish to coordinate or open up mutually. The participants in these actions are therefore programme 'owners' (typically ministries or regional authorities defining research programmes) or programme 'managers' (such as research councils or other *research funding* agencies managing research programmes).

Since the introduction of the scheme, a large number of ERA-NETs have been funded, involving hundreds of national research programmes.¹⁹

ERA-NETs span a wide range of research fields such as transport, energy, environment, industrial technologies, plant and human health, astrophysics and social sciences. ERA-NET actions have been also set up to address more horizontal topics such as international cooperation, SMEs, metrology or the promotion of gender balance in research.

The networking and mutual opening of research programmes require a progressive approach.

The ERA-NET scheme therefore has a long-term perspective and it is flexible in order to accommodate the different ways in which public research funding is organised in Member States and/or Associated Countries.

In contrast to FP6, the ERA-NET scheme is no longer conceived as a 'stand-alone' action in FP7, but as an implementation tool available to the Themes of the Cooperation specific programme and to the Parts of the Capacities Programme.

Several ERA-NETs have been already able to contribute and interact with proposed Joint Programming Initiatives, aimed at addressing major societal challenges. The involvement of programme managers and programme owners in ERA-NETs renders them a useful instrument also in this context.

Thanks to the ERA-NET scheme, tangible progress has been made in reducing fragmentation across the European Research Area (ERA).

7.3.2. Areas

The ERA-NET/ERA-NET PLUS activity of the International Cooperation activities of the Capacities Programme aims at increasing the coordination of international cooperation activities of the EU Member States and/or Associated Countries and pull co-funding for

¹⁹ ERA-NET actions cover both national and regional research programmes. To avoid repetition, the term 'national research programme' will be used in this section to refer to both national and regional research programmes.

multilateral research actions that comes from EU Member States and/or Associated Countries and the targeted third countries. The activity will support either the ERA-NET or ERA-NET PLUS action and will target the following countries/regions:

- India;²⁰
- Latin America and Caribbean countries;
- Mediterranean Partner Countries;²¹
- Russia;²²

The use of the ERA-NET PLUS action is encouraged for the countries/regions, which were targeted by previous ERA-NET actions or have already indicated their commitment to engage in such an undertaking.

7.3.3. ERA-NET actions

Funding Scheme: 'Coordination and Support Action' (Coordinating Action)

The aim of ERA-NET actions is to network research programmes carried out at national or regional level, with a view to their mutual opening and the development and implementation of joint activities.

Additional Eligibility criteria for ERA-NET actions

The minimum number of participants in an ERA-NET consortium is **3 independent legal entities** which finance or manage publicly funded national or regional programmes. ***Each of these must be established in a different Member State or Associated Country.***

Partners for ERA-NET actions eligible to satisfy the above condition are:

- Programme owners: typically national ministries/regional authorities responsible for defining, financing or managing research programmes carried out at national or regional level;
- Programme 'managers' (such as research councils or funding agencies) or other national or regional organisations that *implement* research programmes under the supervision of the programme owners;
- Programme owners (typically national ministries/regional authorities) which do not have a running or fully fledged research programme at the moment of submitting an ERA-NET proposal, but which are planning, and have committed, to set up such a programme, are also eligible if their participation is well justified and adds value to the overall programme coordination.

Sole participants (as referred to in Article 10 of the Rules for Participation) are eligible if the above-mentioned minimum conditions are satisfied by the legal entities forming together a

²⁰ Follow-up of the successful New Indigo action, SFIC priority.

²¹ Implementation of a recommendation of the Monitoring Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Cooperation in S&T (MoCo) meeting in June 2011 in Szeged.

²² Follow-up of the successful ERANET RUS action.

sole participant. A sole participant shall explicitly indicate which of its 'members' are either programme owners or programme managers in the proposed action, and indicate for these members the respective national/regional programmes which are at the disposal of the proposed ERA-NET action.

Provided that the proposal complies with the minimum number of participants required in an ERA-NET action as described above, the following legal entities are eligible:

- a) Programme owners and programme managers not established in a Member State or Associated Country;
- b) Private legal entities (e.g. charities) which own or manage research programmes, if their participation is well justified and adds value to the overall programme coordination.

The participation of programme owners and programme managers from the targeted countries or regions is considered essential for the success of the actions, this will be taken into account in the evaluation (management criterion).

Technical content/scope

The networking of programmes may involve several levels of cooperation and coordination, depending on the degree of maturity of the network. The use of the ERA-NET scheme should make this evolution possible and should adopt a step-by-step approach.

In this respect, a four-step approach covering the following activities could be envisaged:

- 1) Information exchange;
- 2) Definition and preparation of joint activities;
- 3) Implementation of joint activities;
- 4) Funding of joint trans-national research.

ERA-NET actions should be ambitious and result in concrete progress towards the opening up of, or cooperation between, the participating research programmes. The cooperation should be sustainable beyond the duration of the ERANET action itself.

Activities funded

The EU contribution will take the form of a grant consisting of a reimbursement of the eligible costs related to the action.

Activities eligible for funding correspond to the four steps identified in the *technical content/scope* section above. More specifically, these include:

(i) Information exchange

This step aims to gather information on the structure and programmes covered by each national research system. It could also improve communication, develop better reciprocal knowledge and promote trust-building among programme owners or managers in similar scientific and technological areas through a mutual learning process, and the systematic exchange of information and good practices.

(ii) Definition and preparation of joint activities

This key part of the action will analyse the information gathered in step 1 and identify the type of cooperation and the areas which will be addressed.

It should result in an **Action plan**, which sets out common strategic issues and prepares for a concrete implementation of joint activities.

(iii) Implementation of joint activities

Experience has shown that much of the added value in co-ordinating national programmes is gained by trying to implement joint activities, even if in a pilot form.

ERA-NET actions are therefore encouraged to develop and implement, from an early stage in the action, common, joint, strategic activities such as:

- Clustering of nationally-funded research actions, to develop complementarities or mutual reinforcement of on-going nationally-funded research programmes;
- Multinational action evaluation procedures (common evaluation criteria and methods of implementation). This could contribute in the long-term to the integration of evaluation practices across national research systems (covering proposal, action and programme evaluation);
- Schemes for joint training activities, such as co-supervised theses and international PhD schemes, to help support a wider cooperation in research;
- Schemes for the mutual opening of facilities or laboratories in one country for scientists from another;
- Converging schemes for programme monitoring and evaluation, including joint monitoring or evaluation;
- Schemes for personnel exchange, in the context of the above activities;
- Specific cooperation agreements or arrangements between participating programmes. These would prepare the ground for further trans-national research programmes and ensure that legal barriers are removed.

(iv) Funding of joint trans-national research.

The strongest form of programme networking implies the funding and implementation of a joint programme of trans-national research projects or actions. This is likely to involve the setting-up of a common strategy, a joint work programme, common (mutually open) or joint calls for proposals or tenders, a common trans-national evaluation system and a common plan for dissemination of results or experiences. In such schemes, actions funded out of a common or joint call for proposals should involve *at least two teams from two different Member States and/or Associated countries and at least one team from a third country targeted by the Call*.

In this step, other ways of implementing joint research actions could also be developed or explored. For example, a complex or very ambitious research agenda could be divided in various parts, which are each addressed through differentiated national calls. Results would then be shared.

Joint activities should be based on a joint strategy and might enable the action partners to implement joint funding activities for focused challenges or specific topics.

The details of new, joint funding activities should be prepared during the first phase of the action, which should not take longer than 12 months. A general vision including the specific focus of future joint funding activities should be set out in the description of work.

As a result of this first phase, an action should deliver a strategy including recommendations for future joint activities. The strategy should prepare the way for joint programming and needs to be backed up by a traceable roadmap

Expected Impact

The ERA-NET scheme aims to reduce the fragmentation of the European Research Area by increasing coordination between participating national research programmes, avoiding unnecessary duplications of effort and developing expertise from mutual learning.

In general, ERA-NET actions should not cover very restricted research domains and should not overlap with other ongoing ERA-NET actions, as this could create further fragmentation.²³

Complementarities to, or coordination with, FP7 activities should be ensured where possible and in particular with other relevant thematic ERA-NET actions as well as international cooperation actions targeting the same countries or regions.

ERA-NET actions should deliver concrete results: establishment of solid networks, mutual opening of activities, development and implementation of joint programmes.

The level of ERA-NET actions will depend on their previous experience:

- Proposals from existing ERA-NETs are expected to include a strong coordination action directly focusing on steps 3 and 4. As such, these proposals should aim to broaden the partnership and/or deepen the coordination between the relevant national programmes in the concerned field. In particular, a global approach including non-European research programmes is encouraged.
- New ERA-NETs, addressing topics not covered by previous ones, are expected to target steps 1 to 3 as a minimum, but are encouraged to aim at the 'four step approach' described above.

The scheme will also enable national or regional systems to collectively take on tasks that they would not have been able to tackle independently.

ERA-NET actions are expected to have a lasting impact. The cooperation developed should provide reliable indications that it could continue beyond the EU funding. Lessons learned and knowledge gathered should be disseminated throughout the European Research Area.

In addition to the general impact described above, more specific expected benefits of ERA-NET actions include:

- Achieving critical mass, to ensure the better use of scarce resources;
- Joining forces to provide common answers to common research problems;
- Addressing global issues, common to many countries;
- Addressing specific geographical issues;
- Developing common governance principles (e.g. with respect to ethics, good practices);

²³ In that context, complementarities with actions that will be selected under the ERA-NET call targeting the Mediterranean Partner Countries to be launched in the Work Programme 2013 of the KBBE Programme should be ensured.

- Bring together national programmes which deal with cooperation with third countries, and enable them to speak with a 'single voice';
- Adopt a global approach, involving third countries research programmes in the ERA-NET activities.

7.3.4. ERA-NET PLUS actions

Funding Scheme: 'Coordination and Support Action' (Coordinating action) CSA ERA-NET PLUS.

Under ERA-NET PLUS actions, the Commission provides an incentive to the organisation of joint calls between national or regional research programmes by 'topping-up' joint transnational funding with EU funding. These joint calls will entail the award of grants to third parties participating in calls for proposals launched under the ERA-NET PLUS actions.

These actions require programme owners or programme managers **from at least 5 different Member States and/or Associated Countries** to plan a single joint call with a clear financial commitment from the participating national or regional research programmes.

The participation of programme owners and programme managers from the targeted third countries is considered essential for the success of the actions; this will be taken into account in the evaluation (management criterion).

The main deliverable of an ERA-NET PLUS joint call shall be an agreed joint selection list for funding of transnational actions, including the formal commitment of the participating programmes to finance these actions. The EU can subsequently agree on a "topping up" of the call resulting in up to 33% of the total cumulative funding of the joint call budget.

Technical content/scope

The ERA-NET PLUS action is divided into two phases of activities:

- Phase 1 (constituting, in principle, the first reporting period):

It covers the activities strictly related to the call preparation and publication, the proposals evaluation and the management of the joint call until the formal release of the short list of selected transnational actions and of the funding decisions from the national or regional programmes.

It is expected that, prior to the submission of the proposal for an ERA-NET PLUS action, a pre-existing base for the cooperation and preliminary agreements on the activities necessary to launch a joint call exist between the potential participants, as well as a scientific rationale like a joint scientific work programme. However it is still possible to finalise some tasks in Phase 1 before the actual publication of the transnational joint call.

- Phase 2 (all following periods, from reporting period 2):

This phase covers the lifetime of the selected transnational actions, their funding, for which the EU contribution is dedicated, and their monitoring.

This second phase covers the periods of implementation, funding and monitoring of the transnational actions. The partners are expected to establish a robust and coherent governance and administrative framework around the coordinator for the implementation of the funding of the actions, as well as their follow-up. The coordinator of the joint call will act as interface to receive and distribute the EU financial contribution to the consortium.

Activities funded

The EU will top up the total of the national contributions to the joint call with additional funding for RTD activities. The EU contribution will be limited to a maximum of 33% of the total contributions to the joint call budget.

The EU contribution will take the form of a grant for the reimbursement of eligible costs as an agreed proportional contribution to the national pooling of funds (for activities relating to the funding of selected trans-national actions, maximum 33%).

In accordance with the Decisions concerning the Seventh Framework Programme²⁴ and the 'Capacities' Specific Programme,²⁵ the provisions of Article 120(2) of the Council Regulation on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities²⁶ and Article 184a of the Commission Regulation laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities,²⁷ shall not be applicable with regard to the financial support provided by the participants in the ERA-NET PLUS actions to third parties participating in actions selected following calls for proposals launched under these actions.

The total duration of a given ERA-NET PLUS action and of the resulting actions shall *not exceed 5 years*.

Additional Eligibility criteria for ERA-NET PLUS actions

- The minimum number of participants in an ERA-NET PLUS action is **5 independent legal entities** which finance or manage publicly funded national or regional programmes. **Each of these shall be established in a different Member State or Associated Country.**

Partners for ERA-NET PLUS actions eligible to satisfy the above conditions are:

- Programme owners: typically national ministries/regional authorities responsible for defining, financing or managing research programmes carried out at national or regional level.
- Programme 'managers' (such as research councils or funding agencies) or other national or regional organisations that implement research programmes under the supervision of the programme owners.

²⁴ OJ L 412, 30.12.2006, p. 1 Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006.

²⁵ OJ L 400, 30.12.2006, p. 299.

²⁶ Council Regulation No. 1605/2002 of 25.6.2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities (OJ L248, 16.09.2002, p1).

²⁷ Commission Regulation No, 2342/2002 of 23.12.2002 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation No. 1605/2002 (OJ L357, 31.12.2002, p1).

Sole participants (as referred to in Article 10 of the Rules for Participation) are eligible if the above-mentioned minimum conditions are satisfied by the legal entities forming together a sole participant. A sole participant shall explicitly indicate which of its 'members' are either programme owners or programme managers in the proposed action, and indicate for these members the respective national/regional programmes which are at the disposal of the proposed ERA-NET PLUS action.

- Provided that the proposal complies with the minimum number of participants required in an ERA-NET PLUS action as described above, the following legal entities are eligible:
 - a) Programme owners and programme managers not established in a Member State or Associated Country;
 - b) Private legal entities (e.g. charities) which own or manage research programmes, if their participation is well justified and adds value to the overall programme coordination.
- A single joint call shall be planned with a clear financial commitment from the participating national or regional programmes.²⁸
- The total planned budget of *the joint call shall have a minimum financial volume of EUR 5 million*, EU contribution included.
- The joint call organised by the national programmes shall establish a set of common general evaluation/selection criteria, such as excellence and European added value.
- A common peer review mechanism for evaluating the proposals submitted to the joint call shall be planned.
- Each project financed out of the joint call shall be trans-national (i.e. minimum of two partners from different Member States or Associated Countries).
- Detailed rules for participation in the funded trans-national projects shall be defined by the call organisers themselves (i.e participating national or regional programmes).

Expected Impact

ERA-NET PLUS actions aim to facilitate the launching of joint calls for proposals between EU Member States or Associated Countries, based on their European added value. In special cases, they may also facilitate the transition of an ERA-NET towards an Article 185 TFEU initiative, where the criteria for the latter are met.

The EU added value will be a critical criterion to evaluate the impact of ERA-NET PLUS actions and will depend on the area/topic covered by the research programmes participating in

²⁸ Proposals must demonstrate that national research programmes are committed to support the call. Selected proposals will have to provide evidence that a commitment has been made by the relevant research programmes.

the joint call. Therefore, the following criteria will help to identify the impact of ERA-NET PLUS actions offering best prospects for sufficient European added value:

1. **Relevance to EU objectives:** The field of the potential topic will be of major interest for the EU as a whole.
2. **Framework Programme relevance.** As regards '**objective**': Demonstration that an ERA-NET PLUS action in that topic will allow the EU to reach the objective of effectively enhancing the coordination of national research programmes. As regards '**content**': The field of the potential topic is expected to be covered by the Framework Programme both in terms of scientific content and of budget allocation.
3. **Pre-existing basis:** The ERA-NET PLUS action is expected to build on a pre-existing basis or coordination experience between national programmes in the topic identified.
4. **Critical mass:** ERA-NET PLUS actions will help national programmes to address research areas that, due to the nature of the field, are better addressed jointly or fields which could not have been addressed independently.
5. **Instrument relevance:** Demonstration that ERA-NET PLUS is the most appropriate instrument for achieving the Framework Programme goals with regard to coordination of national research programmes (i.e.: avoiding fragmentation, etc.). Demonstration that implementing an ERA-NET PLUS action in a given field is more appropriate to coordination goals than other possible FP7 actions.

ERA-NET PLUS actions are expected, where appropriate, to facilitate the development of a more global approach to the topics addressed, involving also non-European research programme.

ERA-NET PLUS actions are expected to have a lasting impact. Proposals submitted to the ERA-NET call shall provide reliable indications whether the cooperation developed could continue beyond the EU funding.

Activity 7.4 Supporting the awareness raising of Horizon 2020 in third countries (FP7-INCO-2013-4, INCO-H2020)

The aim of this activity is to support awareness-raising of Horizon 2020 in third countries.

7.4.1. Proposed activities:

The action will focus on:

- Raising awareness in third countries of the opportunities available in H2020 for research and innovation actors through the organisation of workshops and seminars;
- Supporting training of contacts in third countries regarding the content and rules of Horizon 2020;
- Sharing good practices in facilitating partnering and the preparation of international collaborative actions;

- Promoting cooperation between contacts in third countries. This may entail various activities such as joint workshops to identify and disseminate good practices, preparation of training materials, benchmarking between contacts in third countries.

The action should also organise in cooperation with DG RTD annual meetings aiming to bring together all contacts in third countries to review cooperation status, issues and perspectives for improvement.

The proposed action shall build upon previous experience and achievements obtained in the INCONTACT²⁹ action ending in 2013. The proposed action should also ensure coherence and coordination with similar awareness-raising and training activities planned throughout INCO-NET and BILAT actions.

7.4.2. Participants:

Participants should have experience in promoting EU Programmes of Research and Innovation in third countries, in particular the dedicated horizontal activities to promote cooperation with third countries. This requirement should be explicitly documented in the proposal and will be reflected in the evaluation (management criterion). The involvement of participants from third countries with similar previous experience is encouraged and this will be reflected in the evaluation (impact criterion).

7.4.3. Funding scheme:

The funding scheme to be used for this activity is the 'Co-ordination and Support Action' (coordinating action).

7.4.4. Expected impact:

- A more consistent level of information and assistance services in third countries.
- More effective participation of organisation from third countries in collaborative actions with European organisations, in line with the principle of mutual benefit.

Activity 7.5 Supporting the EU access to third countries programmes

No such activities are foreseen in this call.

Activity 7.6 Reinforcing cooperation with Europe's neighbours in the context of the ERA

No such activities are foreseen in this call.

²⁹ Additional information available at <http://www.ncp-incontact.eu>

Activity 7.7 Strengthening European research facilities in third countries

No such activities are foreseen in this call.

Activity 7.8 Strengthening joint European S&T centres in third countries

No such activities are foreseen in this call.

Activity 7.9 Reinforcing cooperation with European Neighbourhood Policy countries on bridging the gap between research and innovation (FP7-INCO-2013-9, R2I-ENP)

Working towards the development of a "Common Knowledge and Innovation Space" is highlighted as one of the priorities of cooperation between EU and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries³⁰ and should cover the whole spectrum from policy dialogue, capacity-building in human resources and infrastructures, cooperation in research and innovation, and mobility.

In this context, the R2I-ENP activity will focus on bridging the gap between research and innovation by aligning better research objectives to socio-economic needs and improving performance in managing, transferring and using knowledge resulting from research. The activity will contribute to enhance cooperation between ENP countries and Member States and/or Associated Countries on addressing key societal challenges of common interest.

7.9.1. Areas:

The two geographic Areas targeted by the activity are the following regional groupings of ENP countries:

- Eastern Partnership:³¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine,
- Mediterranean Partner Countries:³² Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian-administered Areas, Syria, Tunisia,

In defining the objectives and content of the activities described above, proposals should take into account the state of play as well as the objectives and needs identified in each bi-regional cooperation framework for deepening and enhancing the STI cooperation.

7.9.2. Technical content/ scope

The R2I-ENP proposals will involve different stakeholders among those involved in the various steps of the "knowledge value chain" such as: research organisations, industry including SMEs (preferably at the level of their representative associations), science parks and innovation clusters, national and regional research and innovation funding agencies, intermediary organisations providing innovation support services, national and regional authorities as well as end users communities. The activities will notably aim to promote

³⁰ Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - A new response to a changing Neighbourhood, COM(2011) 303 final.

³¹ Moldova, although part of Eastern Partnership, is an FP7 Associated Country and Moldovan legal entities can participate as such in the activity.

³² Israel, although part of Mediterranean Partner Countries, is an FP7 Associated Country and Israeli legal entities can participate as such in the activity.

interaction and transfer of knowledge between academia, research organizations and industry for an effective market uptake of research results through innovative products and services.

Proposed actions should focus on **only one societal challenge among those identified in the Commission proposal for Horizon 2020.**³³

7.9.3. Proposed activities

Actions will involve organisations in Member States and/or Associated countries and ENP countries to carry-out the cooperation activities such as:

- Promoting networking between actors in the "knowledge value chain" to better focus research on socio-economic needs as well as to facilitate exploitation of research results, notably through the organization of brokerage events;
- Identifying concrete opportunities as well as potential bottlenecks related to cooperation and knowledge transfer between public research and industry, take-up of research results in particular by start-ups and existing SMEs, and innovation management and financing in the targeted countries;
- Improving competencies and mutual learning by promoting exchange of best practices through twinnings between relevant organisations (including national and regional innovation agencies), training activities, exchange of staff and possible mobility schemes notably between research and industry, support for young innovative companies to set-up technological partnerships;
- Providing innovation support services (technical assistance on e.g. market and risk assessment, access to risk capital, Intellectual Property Rights issues, business plan, compliance with standards, innovation management skills) to organizations from Member States and/or Associated Countries and ENP countries already engaged in or wishing to develop partnerships.

Where appropriate, proposals will describe how they will build on, complement and ensure coordination with relevant activities (existing or planned), notably the Preparatory Action funded by the European Parliament³⁴ and those implemented through the EIT and its Knowledge Innovation Centres, the Framework Programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instruments (ENPI), especially those aiming to reinforce STI capacities in ENP countries.³⁵

7.9.4. Implementation and management

7.9.4.1. Funding scheme(s)

The funding scheme that applies is the 'Coordination and Support Action' (coordinating action).

³³ Societal challenges defined in the Commission proposal "Horizon 2020 - The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation", COM(2011) 808.

³⁴ Preparatory Action: "Euromed innovation entrepreneurs for change", implemented by DG ENTR.

³⁵ Calls FP7-INCO-2010-6 and FP7-INCO-2011-6; Medibitkar (regional), SRTD (Jordan), RDI I (Egypt), RDI II (Egypt) and PASRI (Tunisia) programmes funded by MEDA and ENPI.

7.9.4.2. Participants:

Each action consortium should be composed of at least two participants from two different countries of each targeted geographic area and two participants from two different Member States and/or Associated Countries.

Each action consortium should include at least two research organisations and two stakeholders from the industry or related business community (including industrial and SMEs associations, entities managing incubators or industrial clusters, innovation support service providers) in view of fostering collaboration on innovation-oriented research and exploitation of research results.

Each action should involve only participants from either the Eastern Partnership or the Mediterranean Partner Countries. Selected actions related to the same targeted geographic Area will be clustered to promote exchange of experience and synergies regarding similar activities and needs (e.g. training, networking and dissemination activities). Proposed actions should allocate 10% of their total budget for participating in joint activities within each cluster. One of the objectives of this clustering will be to identify common structural weaknesses in the research to innovation chain and coordinated policy measures to address them. In this context, close coordination should be ensured with INCO-NET and BILAT actions targeting the same countries or regions. Strengthening the innovation chain in the targeted geographic Areas will in turn enhance opportunities for mutually beneficial bi-regional cooperation in innovation.

7.9.5. Expected impact

- To foster mutually beneficial public-private-partnerships between Member States and/or Associated Countries and ENP countries through the market uptake of research results.
- To contribute to the achievement of a Common Knowledge and Innovation space between the EU and ENP countries through enhancing cooperation between research and innovation actors on both sides.
- To increase the potential of STI cooperation between Member States and/or Associated Countries and ENP countries under the Horizon 2020 and to contribute to the definition of bi-regional programmes on innovation.