



## **‘S&T International Cooperation Network for Eastern European and Central Asian Countries - *IncoNet EECA*’**

*Funded under the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Community*

### **1. Background and objectives**

The countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) are of utmost importance for the political, economic and social development of the European Union. As a neighbourhood region and as a huge resource in various respects, the political and social stability of the EECA countries and their economic growth contribute to prosperity and welfare in Europe as a whole.

The EECA countries have significant potential both in terms of the strong academic community and of worldwide leading S&T institutes in a variety of scientific disciplines. In order to make optimum use of each others academic strengths, to share respective resources and to prepare the ground for a joint transfer of academic results to national, regional and worldwide markets there is a strong bi-regional interest in enhancing S&T cooperation.

Taking into account the aforementioned context and in order to achieve its goals, the *IncoNet EECA* project is organized in three complementary and interacting layers:

#### 1<sup>st</sup> layer: Policy dialogue

The project will set up a sustainable, knowledge based, bi-regional dialogue platform between stakeholders from the EU-MS and AC, and the EECA countries.

In addition, the project will also address other Community policies to identify complementary opportunities and to contribute to the development of synergies among the relevant instruments.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> layer: Enhancing the participation of researchers from EECA in FP7

The project will implement several activities aiming at an increased participation of researchers from EECA countries in FP7, particularly in the Cooperation, People and Capacities Specific Programmes.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> layer: Analyses, monitoring and dissemination

In order to feed the policy dialogue and to increase its efficiency, the project will implement a series of analyses. In addition, the project will monitor its own activities with particular emphasis on their sustainability and will implement coherent dissemination activities in order to increase its visibility and impact.

### **2. Dialogue activities**

Unlike with other regions (e.g. Western Balkan Countries, Mediterranean Partner Countries, etc.), an EU – EECA policy dialogue platform does not exist and consequently, a major objective for the

*IncoNet EECA* would be the setting-up of such a platform. The implementation of this initiative on the one hand should build on existing structures (such as the Working Group on S&T of the Black Sea Economic cooperation - BSEC), and on the other hand should take into consideration specificities (such as the joint policy of Four Common Spaces with Russia and the existing cooperation Agreements in S&T between EU - Russia, and EU - Ukraine).

More specifically the project will:

- Establish a **Regional S&T Policy Dialogue Platform (RPDP)** which will bring together National Representatives/policy makers from the EU MS and AC and from the EECA countries, as well as representatives of the European Commission's services, acting as observers. The Regional Platform among other activities will:
  - i. Provide a forum for the discussion of research priorities and initiatives;
  - ii. Address the regional (i.e. multilateral) dimension of S&T cooperation; and
  - iii. Act as Advisory Committee to the *IncoNet EECA* project.
- Set up and sustain a bilateral **S&T Policy Dialogue Platform (PDP-RU)** involving stakeholders from Russia, EU-MS, AC and representatives of the European Commission's services acting as observers. Such a distinct Platform is essential due to the particular importance and dynamics of the cooperation with Russia and the specific character of the bilateral relations between the EU and its Member States and Russia.
- Highlight and improve the existing cooperation in S&T with Ukraine and develop new opportunities and links between the Ukrainian and European scientific communities. To this end, a **S&T Policy Dialogue Platform with Ukraine (PDP-UA)** will be set up, involving national representatives/policy makers from Ukraine, EU-MS and AC, and representatives of the European Commission's services acting as observers.

In addition, the project will address other EU policies and instruments (such as the EU Neighbourhood Policy - ENP, the EU Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme – CIP, etc.) in order to explore new synergies.

### **3. Implementation and dissemination activities**

The **implementation activities** of the project include all the necessary actions that would organize and sustain the policy dialogue (e.g. setting up secretariats for the policy dialogue platforms, organizing the platform meetings, etc.), as well as a broad spectrum of activities aiming at:

- An increased participation of researchers from EECA in FP7 through the organization of information days and brokerage events, the identification of barriers, the training, support and networking of NCPs/NIPs, the formulation of proposals for Specific International Cooperation Activities (SICAs) in the FP7 Themes, etc.
- The analysis of key issues and the preparation of reports that will feed the policy dialogue. These analyses include: the improvement of S&T indicators, the review of S&T cooperation patterns, the mapping of outstanding research institutes and the review of national policies towards global challenges.

A series of important **dissemination activities** will provide the necessary visibility of the project to both the scientific community and the policy makers and stakeholders. Among these activities we could mention:

- The setting up of a Central Information Office, complemented by a web portal and website, that would raise awareness for S&T potential in the EECA, will inform interested stakeholders from science, industries and policy making about opportunities for an enhanced S&T cooperation and will foster active networking among the science communities and R&D oriented innovative industries in the MS, AC and the EECA partner countries.
- The organization of 'EECA sessions' in major European scientific conferences, as well as the organization of conferences and events at the highest political level that would promote and consolidate the EU – EECA S&T cooperation.

#### **4. Monitoring and review activities**

The *IncoNet EECA* is a large and rather challenging project involving numerous partners from many countries, and including many different activities. In this context, it has been considered important to include in the project tasks that would address specifically:

- The quality of the overall process (SWOT analysis of the project, quality of the Deliverables);
- The establishment of links with other projects addressing EECA; and
- The sustainability of activities that are undertaken in order to ensure their continuation beyond the limits of the project, wherever applicable.

The aforementioned three tasks are examining the *IncoNet EECA* project from a somehow macroscopic point of view and are complementary to the typical reviewing process foreseen in the contract.

## LIST OF PARTNERS

Participant no. *	Participant short name	Participant organisation name	Country
1 (Coord.)	ICBSS	International Centre for Black Sea Studies	Greece
2	DLR	International Bureau of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research – German Aerospace Center	Germany
3	HSE	State University - Higher School of Economics	Russia
4	FFG	Austrian Research Promotion Agency	Austria
5	NIP	The National Information Centre for Ukraine-EU S&T Cooperation	Ukraine
6	TUBITAK	The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey	Turkey
7	ENQHEEI	European Network for Quality of Higher Engineering Education for Industry	France
8	InExCB-KZ	Independent Expert Consulting Board to Promote Scientific Research Activity in Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan
9	VINNOVA	Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems	Sweden
10	IUCP-T	Indo-Uzbek Centre for Promotion S&T Cooperation	Uzbekistan
11	ZSI	Centre for Social Innovation	Austria
12	CIT	Centre of Ideas and Technologies	Armenia
13	HELP - FORWARD	Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas – Help Forward Network	Greece
14	ANAS	National Academy of Sciences of Republic of Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan
15	BAS	Bulgarian Academy of Sciences	Bulgaria
16	ASM	Academy of Sciences of Moldova	Moldova
17	RCN	Research Council of Norway	Norway
18	ARCHIMEDES	Archimedes Foundation	Estonia
19	BelISA	Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Science & Technology Sphere Information Support	Belarus
20	NSPSA	National School of Political Studies and Public Administration	Romania
21	GNSF	Georgian National Science Foundation	Georgia
22	IPPT-PAN	National Contact Point for Research Programmes of the EU	Poland
23	AKA	Academy of Finland	Finland